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FROM

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THE WORLD IN REVOLT

A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF OUR TIMES

THE WORLD IN REVOLT · A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF OUR TIMES

By DR. GUSTAVE LE BON

Translated by BERNARD MIALL

NEW YORK
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1921

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TO

MY EMINENT FRIEND

LOUIS BOUDENOOT

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

PRESIDENT OF THE ARMY COMMISSION

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF HIS VALUABLE

ASSISTANCE IN THE PUBLICATION OF MY

BOOKS DURING THE WAR

GUSTAVE LE BON

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INTRODUCTION

THE NEW ERA

THE year 1918 marked a bright and conspicuous date in the annals of our history. After a series of successes which seemed to forecast their eventual triumph, our aggressors suddenly foundered in a cataclysm which at a single blow destroyed the oldest monarchies of Europe.

Never did such contradictory and unforeseen events occur within so brief a period. In the age of miracles it would have seemed a thing beyond doubt that the mysterious higher powers had intervened to change the path of destiny.

The powers capable, despite all forecasts, of subjugating the most formidable Empire that the world has ever known were mighty indeed, but not mysterious. They belonged to that transcendent domain of psychological forces which, in the course of the centuries, have so often succeeded in dominating material powers, whatever their magnitude.

In all the phases of the terrible conflict these moral powers manifested their activity. In countries formerly devoid of military material and without soldiers they called up innumerable legions, armed with ships and guns.

Day after day material and visible agencies came into being under the influence of the invisible powers, until the moment when the former became capable of surmounting obstacles regarded as invincible.

Psychological forces, in which moral activities are included, do not control the fate of battles merely. They rule over all the departments of national life and determine the destinies of peoples.

Conceived in the same spirit as our previous volumes on the war, this new volume will examine, from the psychological point of view, some of the problems to which the great conflict has given rise. We shall see once again that the majority of political, military, economic or social questions belong to the province of psychology.

This science, so uncertain in the past, when it confined itself to the domain of pure theory, has become capable of throwing light upon the most difficult problems. Statesmen, generals and manufacturers even invoke its services daily.

That so many problems, past and present, are of a psychological order is due to the fact that the motive forces of national life, apart from biological needs, are to be found in the national conceptions of things. Now these conceptions are derived from passions and feelings, which have always been the great motive forces of humanity from the very beginnings of its history.

New civilizations have been born, and the conflicts which of old were fought upon land or at sea are now carried on underground, under the surface of the seas and in the air; but while the understanding has evolved in the course of the ages, our feelings are identical with those which inspired our remotest ancestors.

Although the nature of our feelings has not altered, the aggregations which they are capable of forming, the complex of which constitutes character, have always varied from race to race, which explains why the destinies of the different countries have been so different.

It was always dangerous to disregard these differences. The Germans lost the war because they did not understand them. Their blunders in respect of national psychology armed against them nations which asked no better than to remain neutral.

The Allies, too, have made blunders of the same nature, especially since the peace. These will be examined in the pages of this book.

* * *

The moral forces which control the evolution of the

peoples are created by long hereditary accumulations. The present condition of a living being results from its previous life, as the plant results from the seed.

It follows from this essential law that societies cannot, as so many dreamers believe, rebuild themselves as they please.

Ancient societies like our own undoubtedly contain a great many outworn elements, not adapted to modern necessities and therefore doomed to disappear. Old-fashioned industrial methods, uselessly complicated administrative procedures, a merchant marine inferior to present needs, etc., are such elements. But all these material changes imply, first of all, changes of mentality. Spiritual values are not the work of institutions, but the qualities of institutions are due to the qualities of men's minds.

The Latin peoples are unhappily the victims of an illusion which weighs more and more heavily upon their history. Having barely emerged from a period when the will of gods and monarchs constituted the great controlling power, they have remained unconsciously persuaded that their rulers have inherited this power and that they ought to direct and control the whole life of the nation.

With modern industrial developments, this illusion becomes more disastrous every day. In the present phase of society no State intervention, however judicious, can replace individual initiative, the love of work, judgement and competence.

* * *

But how can the mentality of a people be to any extent modified, since the most imperious decrees are powerless to change it ?

There are not many means of acting on the human soul. Apart from religious beliefs, which, for that matter, are active only in ages of faith, the only means of action is education. It was by this means that Prussia, in the course of fifty years, completely unified the minds of Germans who were divided by aspirations, race and beliefs.

The most necessary of modern reforms would be the entire transformation of the educational system. A difficult task; for very few people understand that the education of the character is much more important than the education of the mind, and that the reading and repetition of text-books and manuals is not enough to transform the soul of a generation.

The principal function of education should be to create those habits which are the guides of everyday life. They direct our conduct and are also the most certain support of morality.

Those peoples who have realized that in order to create habits, and above all the habit of being able to will, it is the character that must be acted upon, must by this fact alone remain greatly superior to those for whom education is purely a matter of books and is addressed solely to the understanding.

* * *

People speak a great deal to-day of the new age, the new spirit, but without exactly defining the meaning of these expressions.

The new spirit is revealing itself more especially as a state of general discontent, accompanied by a craving for change.

This mental state is the natural consequence of the frightful upheaval from which the world has not yet emerged. It has shaken the conceptions by which our human societies used to live and which, having betrayed their ineffectiveness, have lost their prestige. Ideas are emerging which are apparently new. They are in violent effervescence and endeavour to impose themselves by force.

The spirit of revolt is observable to-day in all peoples and in all classes.

We see the spirit of revolt among the workers, who, having obtained a fabulous increase of wages as well as a considerable reduction of their hours of work, wish to seize political power and become rulers in their turn.

We see the spirit of revolt in the old middle classes, whose situation has become so greatly inferior to that of the "workers" and the shopkeepers that they feel themselves threatened with extinction.

We see the spirit of revolt also in the educated "unemployables"; more especially in France and India. Convinced that degrees and diplomas obtained by learning text-books by heart ought to cause the foremost positions to be conferred upon them, they wish to overthrow a social order which disregards their merits. The dictatorship of the proletariat for which they are clamouring is in reality their own dictatorship.

* * *

The causes of the present discontent are therefore various. One of the most justifiable is the impotence of the heads of the State to establish, as they solemnly promised to do, a lasting peace at a time when they wielded dictatorial power.

Assembled in a Supreme Council, the masters of the world, in their speeches, gave the peoples reason to hope for the disappearance of militarism, followed by a world-wide peace and international relations based upon justice and the protection of the weak.

The reality has proved to be very different. Once again men have had to realize that in politics the principles invoked have no relation to conduct.

Far from disappearing, militarism has merely increased, and is now imposing itself upon peoples to whom it had always been unknown. Powerful States like France and Great Britain do not hesitate to annex countries too weak to resist them. The attitude of the weak nations to the strong has become that of a defenceless quarry to a pitiless hunter.

Despite the principles so loudly proclaimed, the world is still allowing itself to be guided by the craving for conquest and the appetites which have governed it hitherto. Nothing is altered, and the crowds must bear with the destruction of their recent hopes.

This, no doubt, is why we see the conceptions that

unconsciously control their minds diverging more and more from those of the governing classes.

The result has been that in the heart of every country two contrary principles have developed: Imperialism and Internationalism. Being irreconcilable, they are inevitably fated to come into conflict and to unsettle the world anew.

Imperialism continues to govern history. England has profited by the war to add enormously to her Empire and to impose her will on the weak nations, replacing the hegemony of Germany in Europe by her own.

At the other side of the world, in the United States and Japan, two other centres of Imperialism are forming, which are destined to dispute the possession of Asia and perhaps to balance the British hegemony.

The Internationalism which is opposed to this Imperialism has a fairly secure economic basis: the interdependence of the nations, resulting from modern industrial development; but it is represented at present only by the uncertain aspirations of rival working classes. It is therefore very doubtful whether its hour has yet arrived.

The Imperialism in process of formation will assuredly not be very tender to those peoples that have not the strength to defend themselves. England, since the peace, has continually imposed her will, even upon her Allies.

She has seized all the German colonies and has declared her protectorate over Egypt, Palestine, Persia, Mesopotamia, etc., to say nothing of the indirect control of the Baltic and the Mediterranean by the British garrisons installed at Danzig and Constantinople. But when France wished to annex a few miles of a coal basin to replace the mines destroyed by the Germans, England energetically opposed the measure. For that matter, she opposed the majority of the French demands.

If the hegemony of a people is characterized by the possibility of imposing its will on less powerful nations, it must certainly be admitted that the British hegemony is firmly established. The historians of the future will perhaps be surprised that France should so readily have accepted it.

* * *

The Imperialism which permits a nation to confer upon itself the right of governing conquered territories and the Internationalism which preaches equality and solidarity between the nations are, as I have already stated, the embodiment of flatly contradictory ideals. They both belong to the domain of those mystic forces which cannot be judged by reason, but only by their action upon men's minds.

The Imperialism which rules the present as it has ruled the course of history was always a powerful generator of the patriotic feeling necessary to the prosperity of the peoples. Without its powerful influence Germany would assuredly have reduced us to servitude.

The patriotism derived from Imperialism is one of those mystic ideals which in all ages have been necessary to sustain the national soul.

Nations may change their ideals; they cannot do without them. Whether this ideal be the power of Rome the greatness of Allah or the hegemony of England, it acts in the same manner and gives the minds dominated by it a fortitude that no rational argument could replace.

* * *

One of the difficulties of the present age is precisely the fact that contradictory and irreducible mystic ideals are everywhere in conflict.

The human soul, whatever its level, has always felt the need of mystic illusions to sustain its aspirations and guide its conduct. This is why, despite all the progress of science, the mystic influences which have so often distracted the world still continue to disturb it.

In our days political beliefs have replaced religious beliefs, but they are in reality nothing but new religions. A blind faith is their actual guide, although they are incessantly invoking reason.

The world is at present as much disturbed by political beliefs as it was during the great religious movements: Islamism, the Crusades, the Reformation, the wars of religion and many others.

The part played by beliefs has been so preponderant

in history that the birth of a fresh mystic ideal has always provoked the dawn of a new civilization and the downfall of previous civilizations. When Christianity triumphed over the ancient gods, the Roman civilization was, by that very fact, doomed to disappear. Asia likewise was transformed by the religions of Buddha and Mahomet. And when in our days a new political belief in a religious shape succeeded in enslaving the inconstant soul of Russia, the world's most gigantic Empire was disintegrated in a few months.

* * *

That Socialism exerts so much influence over the multitude to-day is due simply to the fact that it constitutes a religion, with its gospel, its priests and its martyrs. The Gospel according to Karl Marx contains as many illusions as any of the previous gospels, but the faithful do not perceive them. One of the most wonderful privileges of faith is that it cannot be influenced by experience, nor by reason.

The adepts of the new faith are propagating it with the zeal of the Early Christians, to whom the gods whom they sought to overthrow were merely impure demons, the accursed offspring of the darkness.

History shows us to what a point the majority of new beliefs were destructive before they became constructive; so that we may well envy peoples like the Anglo-Americans, who, having succeeded in adapting their ancient faith to the requirements of a new age, have contrived to retain their gods.

The pragmatist philosophy developed on the soil of the United States teaches that beliefs should be valued not according to their veracity but according to their degree of social utility.

The gods, therefore, and the mystic forces from which they are derived must not be judged solely by the light of reason. Philosophy should regard them as forming part of the series of necessary and fruitful hypotheses with which the sciences themselves have never been able to dispense.

These considerations are, however, devoid of interest, since the birth and death of the gods is independent of our will. We are still ignorant of their genesis, and know only that, subject to a common law, they finally decline and perish, but that the mystic spirit that gives birth to them retains through the ages an indestructible power.

More than once in the course of history has mystic logic come into conflict with rational logic, but they belong to spiritual cycles too different to exert any mutual influence. When the men of a given period renounce the gods whom they have adored, it is that they may adopt others.

* * *

We are now at one of those moments of transition when the peoples waver between the ancient beliefs and a new faith. The present moment is a difficult one. Political Europe, and moral Europe also, represents an enormous building, half destroyed, which will have to be rebuilt.

In this gigantic task everyone must play his part, however modest it may be. The collaboration of the scientists and the thinkers will be not one of the least important factors.

Preoccupied more especially in following the caprices of opinion, without which he cannot exist, the political man confines himself to the particular urgencies of daily life, contenting himself with those approximate solutions whose dangers history has so often demonstrated. His destiny, as Clemenceau has justly remarked, " is to leave to the thinkers the glory of lofty spiritual initiative, confining himself to the average expression of average formulas, in which the average feelings of the average crowd may be found."

* * *

Never was reflection so necessary as to-day. We are constantly advised to act, but of what value is action without thought for a guide ? Reflection leads to foresight and foresight to the avoidance of catastrophes. Those

too rare writers who, perceiving the approach of the inevitable conflict, continually advised us to prepare for it, had long reflected upon the situation. We paid no attention to them. The crowds and their leaders preferred to give ear to the assurances of a legion of pacifists who affirmed that, according to their enlightened and infallible arguments, wars had become impossible, so that preparation for war was useless.

It is partly to these theorists, who saw the world only through their dreams, that France owes the devastation that has overtaken her. If they were still listened to we should have reason to despair of the future and resign ourselves to a hopeless decadence.

A celebrated English Minister very truly stated in Parliament that the future of the peoples would depend above all upon the degree in which they were able to profit by the lessons of the war.

Having helped to overcome the enemy's guns, thought must now be our guide to conduct. Although the written word has little influence upon the older generations, it may at least affect the younger generation, whose ideas are not yet crystallized. Thought represents the most vital element in the history of a people; for it slowly shapes the national soul.

BOOK I

THE MENTAL EVOLUTION OF THE PEOPLES

CHAPTER I

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE PEOPLES AND THEIR HISTORY

Of the different elements that have power to determine the future of the nations, the most powerful will always be the psychological factors. The destiny of the nations is woven, above all, of the qualities of men's minds. A great social development will be effected on the day when every citizen realizes that the triumph of this or that political party or of this or that belief is powerless to pave the way to final happiness.

Many centuries have passed away since Aristotle and Plato discussed psychology. They had disciples who continued their work, but if we seek in their books for the means of diagnosing men's characters and influencing their conduct, we shall discover that the progress effected during two thousand years of investigation is in reality very small. The perusal of the most learned books adds little to the compendious knowledge taught by the necessities of life.

Modern events will inevitably give a fresh impetus to a science which is still very unreliable.

The World War, in fact, was a vast laboratory of experimental psychology. It forced men to recognize the importance of psychological methods and the insufficiency of the data furnished by a classical education in deter-

mining the character of nations, and, consequently, their conduct. What did we know of the soul of the Germans, or that of the Russians? In reality, nothing. Similarly, the Germans had no actual knowledge of the soul of the French or that of the English.

Our enemy's ignorance of psychology was of considerable advantage to us, as the result was that their anticipations in respect of the orientation of several countries whose neutrality seemed certain were completely disappointed.

This ignorance of the mentality of nations is due not only to the difficulty of observing them otherwise than through ourselves, that is, through prejudices and passions, but also to the fact that the national characteristics which are to the fore in normal periods are not precisely those which are manifested in great emergencies.

Elsewhere, while investigating the variations of the personality, I have shown that the *ego* of each person represents an equilibrium susceptible of important variations. The apparent constancy of the personal character results merely from the constant nature of the environment in whose midst we habitually live and with which we are in equilibrium.

If, therefore, a psychological science much more advanced than ours succeeded in determining, with the exactness of a chemical analysis, the habitual character of a people and the means of influencing it, this science would still be incomplete. It would approach completion only when able to show how characters react under the pressure of the novel events which surround them.

* * *

The discoveries of modern psychology, however, already enable us to make fairly reliable diagnoses. We know now that individual and collective psychology are subject to very different laws. For example, although an isolated individual may generally appear to be an extreme egoist, his egoism, by the mere fact that the same person is incorporated in a crowd, will be transformed into an altruism sufficiently complete to lead him to sacrifice

his life to the cause adopted by the collectivity of which he forms a part.

We know, too, that in addition to the shifting elements of the individual character there are extremely stable ancestral elements established by the past. Strong enough to limit the oscillations of personality, they immediately establish national unity in times of crisis.

It is these characteristics, special to each people, that determine its destiny. That sixty thousand Englishmen are able to keep under the yoke three hundred millions of Hindoos who are their equals in intelligence is due to certain qualities of character possessed by the invaders. That the Spaniards have merely brought anarchy upon the Latin countries of South America is due to their defects of character.

Similarly, we shall see in the course of this volume that the industrial inferiority of France before the war was solely due to certain insufficiencies of the French character.

The Germans disregarded all these fundamental ideas when at the beginning of the recent European conflict they believed that they might with certainty count on the neutrality of England, a prey to political conflict and on the brink of civil war with Ireland. They committed the same blunder in regarding France, then profoundly divided by religious and social conflicts, as an easy victim. The German rulers failed to foresee that the ancestral soul would unite all parties against the aggressors.

In the course of this volume we shall give many other examples of the applications of psychology.

* * *

To influence a people one may do as the Germans did: make use of threats, violence and corruption. These means of enforcing conduct are sometimes efficacious, but their value is transitory and uncertain.

Psychology has at its disposal more reliable methods which do not involve the use of violence. We shall enumerate these in a subsequent chapter.

To determine the characteristics of each nation, the limits of their variability and the means of influencing them within these limits, ought to be one of the corner-stones of politics. The task is obviously a difficult one, since the psychology of the greatest nations, England, the United States and Germany in particular, was, before the war, very imperfectly understood. We do not know much more about ourselves, and this need not surprise us overmuch, for to know oneself has always been more difficult than to know others. It is very difficult even to foresee with any certainty how one will behave under given circumstances before these circumstances exist.

A few statesmen—a very few—have in the course of history succeeded in determining the psychology of the various peoples with accuracy, and this was one of the principal causes of their success. For the institutions which a nation will accept and the means by which it can be ruled depend upon its character.

If it is difficult to understand the mentality of a people, this is because its literary, artistic and scientific productions, which reveal its intelligence, do not by any means interpret its character. Now, a man's behaviour depends upon his character, not upon his intellect, and there is no parallelism between these two regions of personality.

If this truth were not commonly overlooked, we should have been less surprised, at the beginning of the war, on beholding a people possessing a very high degree of civilization committing actions of a bestial ferocity that aroused a world-wide indignation. People were then apparently amazed to find that the mind of a scientist could mask the instincts of a barbarian. But this possibility had long been known to the psychologists. They knew, too, that the true character of a man is to be read in his actions only, not in his speech.

The actions to be recorded as elements of a diagnosis of character are, I repeat, those committed in great emergencies, not those of everyday life, in which the individual, being closely hemmed in by his environment, has little opportunity to reveal his personality.

For what, as a matter of fact, are the motives of our everyday conduct? By what influences are we guided? If we had to reflect and reason before each of our actions, life would be a tissue of uncertainties and hesitations.

It is not that, because our everyday activities are controlled and guided by various necessities: those arising from our education, our social group, our profession, etc. The sum of these necessities eventually creates a subconscious mind which is more or less artificial, but which, under the ordinary circumstances of life, constitutes our real guide.

The fundamental elements of character have a different origin. They are engendered by atavistic influences and constitute our moral equipment.

These elements are fixed, but side by side with them we find the movable elements, which can be modified by environment, belief and education, and which serve to form the slightly artificial mind of everyday life of which we were speaking a moment ago.

* * *

This mental variability enveloping stability is in accordance with a very general biological law. We know that in all living species, from the vegetable to man, there are fundamental characteristics which enable us to determine these species and variable elements created by changing environment or the artifices of the breeder. The variable elements superposed on the invariable characteristics may sometimes conceal them, but never destroy them. It was from such discoveries as this that the law of the invariability of species was formerly deduced.

This law holds good from the anatomical point of view —at least as regards the brief period of our observations —and it is equally true in the psychological domain. The nations, in the course of history, like the animal and vegetable species in the course of geological periods, have acquired the fundamental characteristics which enable us to classify them, and with them those characteristics which are capable of variation because they have not yet been fixed by heredity.

The invariable characteristics inherited from our ancestors constitute the collective soul of a people. In great emergencies—for example, when the very life of the race is threatened—this collective soul assumes the direction of our efforts. I do not think I was going too far when I maintained, some time ago, that the Battle of the Marne which saved France in 1914 was won by the dead.

* * *

We are not always dominated by the burden of heredity. Under different influences the mobile elements of our personality often become preponderant to the point of transforming us, at least for the time being.

The elements which are capable of undergoing a development which makes them, for the time being, predominant may be of biological origin, as are hunger and various other cravings; or of affective origin, as are the passions and emotions; or of mystic-origin, as are beliefs; or, lastly, they may be of rational origin. But reason is as a rule too weak to dominate these other influences.

History, in fact, clearly shows us the impotence of reason in great emergencies, such as the Crusades, the wars of religion, the foundation of Islam and the recent war.

Evidently the genesis of such events cannot be attributed to reason. The time when it will guide the nations is apparently still remote. The scientific discoveries of the last century have been responsible for a certain illusion as to its social function. Supreme in the laboratories, reason exerts but very little influence over conduct, because the biological, affective and mystic elements that control us are much more powerful.

The appearance of reason in the world is comparatively recent, while the appetites, feelings and passions hark back to the origins of life, so that it is only natural that they, by their hereditary accumulation, should have acquired a weight with which the intellect is rarely strong enough to contend.

* * *

Not only do the great historical events but recently referred to prove the domination exercised over conduct by certain affective or mystic elements; they also justify the following psychological law:

When, under various influences, one of the elements of the personality acquires a preponderant importance, it annuls, for the time being, the action of the other elements and assumes the exclusive control of conduct.

This law is verified above all in periods of crisis, such as that of the French Revolution. When the tempest has passed its authors can no longer understand their actions.

The orientation of all the faculties in a single direction may result in the creation of a great force, above all when this orientation is collective. This was demonstrated in a remarkable manner when some obscure Arabian nomads, hypnotized by a new faith, invaded the world and founded a new empire. All their faculties and all their efforts were dominated by the mystic necessity of enforcing the worship of Allah.

The enterprise undertaken by the Pan-Germans recalls, in more respects than one, that of the disciples of Mahomet. Obeying the same psychological influences, they too endeavoured to enslave the world in the name of a divine mission and a supposed racial superiority.

* * *

An almost world-wide war, such as that whose development we have witnessed, will of necessity produce certain modifications in the elements of the character of such nations as are capable of variation. What will these modifications be?

They will differ according to the mentality of the race. I do not foresee any profound changes among the English, whose character has to a great extent been consolidated by the past. However protracted the conflict and the disturbances involved thereby, its influence will not outweigh that of the past.

It is less easy to prophesy in respect of such peoples as the Americans, whose national character, before the United States entered the war, was not as yet very homo-

geneous. For them the war will have been a powerful agent of unification.

Again, we cannot as yet be sure whether this country, which of old was extremely pacific, will or will not now acquire the instincts of militarism and conquest.

* * *

The nations of which I have been speaking had acquired, by inheritance, environment and education, a more or less stable mental equipment. They possessed what I have elsewhere called an internal discipline, and, being able to govern themselves, they have no need to suffer the external discipline imposed by a master.

This possession of an internal discipline has always been one of the great superiorities of civilization over barbarism.

Internal discipline is the basis of unconscious morality, that is, of the only true morality. The Romans in the past and the English in the present are examples of nations which have acquired this form of discipline.

Those nations which do not possess it cannot be guided in social life save by an external discipline sufficiently energetic to give them the orientation that they cannot find in themselves. Such, in antiquity, were those Asiatics whom Greece and Rome justly described as barbarians. Such, in the modern period, are the Mongols and the Russians. These peoples have known times of prosperity, but this prosperity was only ephemeral, since it was dependent solely on the valour of a leader strong enough to transform a mere horde of inconstant minds for the time being into a solid mass. When the leader disappeared the mass melted away.

The sinister disintegration of Russia shows us plainly what becomes of nations without a past, without traditions, without education, and consequently without internal discipline, when they are suddenly freed from the tutelage which maintained their cohesion.[1] They fall into chaos

[1] The Russians possess traditions of a kind in their *byliny* or popular legends. It is worth noting that these celebrate deeds

and anarchy with all its violence. The passions, no longer bridled, break loose. Every man destroys anything that incommodes him. Murder and incendiarism are committed without restraint, and a people which was slowly rising toward civilization lapses into barbarism.

In the case of these nations without moral equipment, without firmly established characteristics, it is useless to attempt to determine the changes that the World War will bring about. Amorphous in the past, they will remain amorphous in the future. Their lot will depend upon the rulers who guide their destinies.

* * *

War does not merely develop the different elements of national character. It also sheds a light upon national defects and emphasizes the necessity of getting rid of these defects.

While it is almost impossible to transform the fundamental elements of a race, which have long been fixed by heredity, it is at least possible to influence their orientation.

The means which can be employed are not numerous. They are limited to the influence of beliefs, of the military system and of education.

If I do not include institutions in this enumeration it is because they are not causes but effects. The Latin republics of America believed it possible to remedy their political and mental anarchy by adopting constitutions resembling that of the United States. They have only increased this anarchy.

We French are, for that matter, the victims of the same psychological illusion when we seek to impose our codes and institutions on the Arabs, the Berbers, the Malagasy and the negroes of our colonies.

Of the three active elements which I have mentioned, beliefs—religious or political—are the most influential. We have already recalled the fact that the Koran trans-

of cunning and violence, and that many of their heroes are peasants of an abnormally acquisitive and bloodthirsty nature.—*Trans.*

formed a nomadic people into armies powerful enough to subjugate part of Europe and Asia.

The expansive power of the French Revolution was due to the fact that it was, to its propagators, a new belief which dominated their minds.

As the creation of such beliefs by governmental action is impossible, there are only two means left of influencing character and uniting men's minds: the military system and education.

These were precisely the means employed by Prussia, above all after the absorption of Germany. The whip at school and the stick in the barracks were the two great factors of the mental formation of modern Germany.

She lost her independence thereby, but gained the qualities of order, vigilant application, patience, attention to detail, and discipline, which, as a result of the industrial development of the world, are precisely the qualities at present necessary to the prosperity of a people.

If the rude means employed by Prussia were indispensable to the acquisition of certain qualities, most peoples would relinquish the hope of acquiring them; but the United States, which have employed neither the stick in the barracks nor the whip in the schools, have shown that it is possible to attain a high degree of development and technical ability simply by an education adapted to the necessities of the present age.

It is no exaggeration to say that the war has led to the discovery of an America whose mentality we had hardly suspected.

I am not speaking merely of the heroic qualities of her improvised armies, which held their own against the most seasoned troops in the world, but of the scientific and industrial knowledge of which these armies gave proof. We saw them set aside our methods of routine and the fetters of a cumbersome bureaucracy, and create, on French soil, towns, railways, seaports and factories, never allowing any difficulties to check them.

In this fashion America showed what her education was worth. Henceforth the world will often have occasion

to apply to the United States for the professors and the models hitherto sought in Germany.[1]

[1] The foregoing brief explanation shows the all-important part played by psychological knowledge in the government of a nation. That the classical psychology is justly disdained is due to the fact that it rarely consists of anything more than theoretical speculations without applicability to the realities of life. The few works of applied psychology hitherto published have, on the contrary, had many readers, and in spite of their occupations eminent statesmen have themselves undertaken to translate them. My *Psychology of the Crowd* was translated into Arabic by Fathy Pasha, Minister of Justice in Cairo, and into Japanese by Mr. Motono, then Japanese Ambassador and afterwards Minister for Foreign Affairs. My *Psychology of Education* was translated into Russian under the editorship of the Grand Duke Constantine, then President of the Petrograd Academy of Sciences. Mr. Roosevelt, ex-President of the United States, was good enough to assure me that during his presidency and on his travels my little book on *The Psychological Laws of the Evolution of the Peoples* never left him. I mention these facts to encourage our young scholars to enter upon a path which is very little trodden and on which discoveries may readily be made.

CHAPTER II

MORAL FORCES IN NATIONAL LIFE

THE war has once more demonstrated the influence of moral forces upon national life. It has also shown us, on several occasions, how these forces may be disintegrated.

The Russian collapse revealed one of the forms of this disintegration. The universal discontent resulting from repeated failures due to the incapacity and treachery of venal leaders constituted a soil in which the revolutionary doctrines propagated by the innumerable agents of Germany readily multiplied. The movement thus provoked was favoured by the promise of land to the peasants and the factories to the workers.

The revolution rapidly spread by mental contagion, and the moral forces of Russia were so far disintegrated that Germany was easily enabled to conquer the provinces which she coveted.

An empire of one hundred and seventy millions of souls, which took centuries to shape, was destroyed in a few months by the action upon primitive minds of those crude formulæ which are often more destructive than artillery.

This prodigious event is teeming with psychological and political lessons.

The Germans, who had succeeded so effectually in disintegrating Russia by their propaganda, believed that they could obtain the same results in France, thanks to the intrigues of purblind Socialists incapable of learning from experience. Adopting their own language to begin with, they spoke of pacifism, disarmament, universal brotherhood, etc.

Germany believed that she had very nearly attained the desired end, since one of the most influential deputies

did not hesitate to declare in the Reichstag "that Bolshevism was as widespread in France as in Russia." And one might have had some excuse for thinking so when certain French Socialists proposed the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of Karl Marx, the most malevolent of our enemies. The Germans, however, were once more deluded in taking superficial movements for a general disturbance. France is a country so stabilized by her past that the ancestral mentality has a very strong hold upon the nation. Divisions and disturbances have been frequent, but these divisions may be compared to the waves that often rise on the surface of the ocean without troubling the calm of its watery depths.

Faced with the failure of their propaganda, the German diplomatists eventually abandoned all humanitarian verbiage and returned to their old methods of intimidation. We had no reason to regret this psychological clumsiness. The most inveterate Socialists began to realize our enemies' true intentions. The example of Russia had already shown them what would have been our lot had their influence succeeded in persuading us to abandon the struggle: poverty, humiliation and servitude.

When a people is threatened with such a destiny, there is nothing left but to fight on to its last man. And we made up our minds to do so.

That we have been triumphant in this war is due to the fact that the moral forces which sustained our armies have never failed.

Their vacillations were only partial and momentary. Endurance alone was contagious, not defeat.

But it was never necessary to teach courage to a race as valiant as the French. It was enough to maintain its continuity of effort by contending against the agents of dissolution maintained by the Germans. Their untiring aim was to sap our energy.

* * *

The incapacity displayed by the Germans in dealing with moral forces, despite their undeniable intelligence, was one of the chief reasons of their failure.

Yet in the end they began to suspect the importance of these forces, for Ludendorff and Hindenburg referred to moral causes to explain their defeat. "It was not," says Hindenburg in his *Memoirs*, "the intervention of America that determined the victory of the Allies; victory was bound to fall to the side which could hold out longest, morally speaking."

As a matter of fact, the German defeat was not due to moral causes only. Strategic causes also played their part in it, with insufficiency of reserves and imprudent manœuvres; there were also biological causes: lassitude due to losses and privations; and lastly affective causes: the feeling of impotence in respect of an enemy whose forces were incessantly increasing, etc.

The mental shock produced by the capitulation was terrible. All the royal dynasties of the confederated States, including that of their chief, the Emperor, collapsed on the same day and were replaced by revolutionary authorities consisting of Workers and Soldiers' Councils, after the fashion of the Russian Soviets. Several States separated themselves from Prussia, and the Empire seemed on the point of splitting up into a series of small independent republics.

But when this first movement had run its course, other moral forces intervened which saved Germany from a dissolution like that of Russia. In nations whose mentality has been stabilized by protracted discipline and a generous education revolutions are never lasting.

Subsequent events have clearly shown the divergent forms that may be assumed by the same revolutionary principles in nations of different mentality.

In the Russian Revolution all the power passed into the hands of the Workers and Soldiers' Councils, directed by a dictator. In the German Revolution the Socialists themselves, with the exception of a few fanatics, could not have had the mystic faith of the Russian apostles in the capacity of the Workers' Councils, a belief which constitutes the true foundation of Bolshevism. They took good care not to meddle with the old administrative machinery. Governors of provinces, heads of adminis-

trative departments and officials of all grades were retained in office. The power of the Workers and Soldiers' Councils very soon became insignificant.

It is worthy of note, moreover, that when the Russian revolutionists favoured the division of Russia into separate provinces, several German Workers' Councils spontaneously sent a manifesto to the National Assembly begging that the ancient Empire might once more become a strongly centralized nation.

* * *

Germany has not yet recovered her moral equilibrium. It is interesting to observe the perturbations which her mentality has undergone since her defeat.

Her psychological condition on the morrow of the defeat is well depicted by the following lines from the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*:

> The enemy on the Rhine, the army demobilized, the German fleet and the greater part of our armaments in the hands of the enemy, hunger, unemployment, the increasing cost of living, civil war in our country: such is Germany after the revolution. . . . What the enemies of Germany did not dare to hope for in their most audacious dreams is now achieved.

The confessions of the German rulers were at first full of humility and resignation.

In the National Assembly at Weimar a Minister admitted that megalomania and the incapacity of a diplomacy directed by soldiers had ruined the country. A deputy added: "What ruined the German people was the demon of pride."

Accustomed to deify force, the Germans bowed themselves before its decrees and were prepared to endure all things.

Unhappily, the Allies did not understand how to profit by this mental collapse at the moment when the armistice was accepted. After an hour's discussion they could have obtained the signature of the plenipotentiaries to the fundamental points of the peace, and could thus have easily secured what was afterwards obtained only in

part and with the greatest difficulty. At this decisive moment we gave but little proof of perspicacity. We see now that the psychological blunders then committed will cost us very dearly.

* * *

The vacillation and weakness of their enemies and the hope of a future alliance with Russia revived the moral energies of the Germans. The idea of retaliation has awakened in their minds, and they are employing against us the psychological weapons whose efficacy will more than once be demonstrated in the pages of this volume.

Germany is counting both on the assistance of the Socialists in enemy countries and on the divergent interests which divide the Allies. England, having possessed herself of the German fleet and having no invasion to fear, opposed the greater part of our claims. Preoccupied with legislating for the future, the President of the United States paid little attention to the necessities of the present moment.

"The oratorical combats of Congress have almost destroyed the work of the armies," wrote a great American newspaper.

A dense cloud of idealism and illusions has isolated Congress from the realities which are threatening the world.

Yet these are formidable in the extreme. While expert orators were exchanging objections, hostilities were resumed in the East, from the Baltic to the Black Sea. On the Esthonian front, the Polish front, the Ukrainian front, the Rumanian front, a violent struggle was still in progress. If the Red Armies were able decisively to enforce upon a country the Socialist gospel with its policy of destruction, this would mean the triumph of an inferior over a superior morality, an inevitable return to that state of barbarism into which the Roman Empire lapsed after the Germanic invasions and into which Russia has fallen to-day.

CHAPTER III

INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL DISTURBANCES CAUSED BY THE WAR

THE war has exerted a powerful influence over character, morality and intelligence. It has revived the instincts of ancestral barbarism and has caused a general aberration of judgement.

The importance of these changes has not escaped some of the statesmen entrusted with the destiny of the nations. In one of his speeches Mr. Lloyd George said:

> The war has disordered and disorganized things in a manner unprecedented in any previous war, and the return to normal conditions will be a fresh source of disturbance. There will be great social and economic disorders. But what touches us most closely is the extent of the moral and spiritual disorder caused by the war. This is a factor upon which the entire future of Great Britain depends.

Of Great Britain and of other countries too, for all have been more or less exposed to the same factors of disintegration.

* * *

The intellectual deterioration to be observed is a consequence of the illusions engendered by the hypertrophy of certain feelings. From these resulted those profound perversions of judgement of which the German publications, and notably the famous manifesto of the "intellectuals," furnished irrefutable proofs.

All the nations, and their rulers too, were frequently lacking in judgement during the war. That the Germans were worse than any other peoples in this respect is due to the fact that their mystic conception of hegemony

developed the popular vanity to the point of provoking crises of collective megalomania.

We may readily realize the intensity of the mental disturbance thus created by perusing the volume entitled *Also sprach Germania*, compiled by Professor Ruplinger from extracts from articles or books emanating from the best-known writers in Germany.

I shall reproduce a few passages from this compilation, referring the reader, for the details of their origin, to the volume in which they are published.

On every page one learns that the German is appointed by God to regenerate the world. The quotations are taken, I repeat, from the writings of well-known "intellectuals." The first is from the pen of an eminent professor of the University of Tübingen:

> We are the most highly civilized nation; it is for us to lead humanity onwards, and any consideration in respect of inferior peoples is a sin against our task.
>
> The German must appoint himself as the executor of the Divine Will upon the other nations.
>
> The nation of Luther, the nation of incomparable geniuses, leaders and heroes has a lofty mission in the world.
>
> We Germans must go through the world with the assurance that we are God's people. The German must feel that he is uplifted above the jumble of nations that surround him, whom he perceives at an unfathomable depth beneath him.
>
> Our Emperor knows in his conscience that he is bound to God by an evangelical piety.
>
> God judges our people capable of becoming the guide of humanity.

Such beliefs lead to such opinions as the following:

> France invaded our country without a shadow of reason. We could not do otherwise than oppose this crime by all imaginable means, even those of the most hideous, the most terrible nature. . . . Thus, in reprisal, it is lawful to shoot perfectly innocent prisoners of war.

A people so superior to others naturally could not consent to remain in contact with them, which explains why a number of writers insistently demanded that all the inhabitants of the conquered provinces—and of Alsace in particular—should be expelled, so that they might be

replaced by Germans. Others went even farther. According to them:

> There will be peace only when the French have disappeared from European soil.

Certain German writers demanded a fresh increase of armaments after the peace, so that—

> from the time peace is concluded our enemies may remain astounded before the armed might which we have determined to develop on land, on the sea and in the air, so that in a few days we should find ourselves in the enemy country with far greater forces than in the present war.

All the nations at war were thus aware of the fate that awaited them if they accepted a doubtful peace with a people whose mentality was so far perverted.

* * *

Let us now consider the impaired morality resulting from the war. The damage done is easily pointed out.

No society has ever lived without rules maintained by traditions, institutions and laws. These rules require all citizens to curb such instincts as are hurtful to the community, to consent to certain sacrifices, etc.

Such restrictions are easily endured when they have been stabilized by a long past. Their sum constitutes a people's moral armament. The stronger this armament, the stronger the nation. When it is firmly established every citizen possesses fundamental ideas of justice, duty and honour which unconsciously guide his conduct. Severe repressive measures are directed against the small number of citizens who seek to avoid their obligations.

Now, what is the effect of war, above all of a protracted war in which the vast majority of the inhabitants of the country are involved? No doubt it develops certain qualities which are not made use of in time of peace: courage, the power of facing danger, absolute devotion to the collective interest, etc. But it is also evident that it completely reverses the customary scale of values. All

that used to be respected is now respected no longer. To kill and destroy becomes an imperious necessity, and the more men the soldier kills the more consideration does he receive.

The result of such necessities is to resuscitate the ferocious instincts of the primitive ages which civilization has with such difficulty restrained. The life of another, formerly respected, very soon seems a trifling thing to the man who is forced every day to kill in order not to be killed.

Of old, war had effects less pernicious than it has to-day. It involved only a limited number of combatants, and owing to difficulties of communication its ravages were confined to a small part of the countries invaded. The rest of the nation did not suffer from it, and was often, indeed, in ignorance of its existence.

Moreover, the wars of the past were far less murderous than modern warfare. To be sure, it sometimes happened that the inhabitants of a captured town were put to the sword, but women and children and religious or other monuments usually escaped destruction after the close of the ages of barbarism.

In modern battles nothing is spared, neither the child in the cradle, nor the old man on the threshold of the tomb, nor ancient cathedrals that a thousand years of warfare have respected.

According to the theories of their philosophers, the Germans believed that they had a right to destroy anything and everything. One of their most celebrated scientists, Haeckel, roundly declares that our principles of liberty, equality and fraternity should be replaced by the law that governs the animal world, that is, by a pitiless conflict in which only the strongest would be able to survive.

With such doctrines, all that used to constitute the moral equipment of civilization—humanity, the protection of the weak, respect for the given word and for treaties—loses its prestige.

The observation of the laws of honour obviously becomes a cause of weakness when we are confronted by peoples

who systematically refuse to keep their engagements as soon as it is possible to shuffle out of them. What international relations can survive when all confidence in treaties has disappeared?

* * *

It is not only international morality that has deteriorated, but also, as I said farther back, the morality of the individual members of each nation. The moral equipment has been more or less shattered everywhere. We are witnessing to-day a true regression of morality.

This phenomenon is especially striking in Germany. Here are the opinions of the correspondent of a leading newspaper:

In the first place there is negligence, *laisses-aller*, in the public services. In this country, where of old everything worked with the exactness of a carefully made machine, trains, posts, telephones and everything now appear to be disordered even in the least complicated parts of the machinery. Everywhere there is a sort of sickness of the will which prevents serious work. The most industrious people on earth has become the laziest.

Immorality has increased in a fantastic degree; throughout the nation, for example, theft is becoming habitual. In the streets or on the railways no one is sure of his pocket-book or his luggage; in every restaurant placards warn the customers to keep an eye on their overcoats; in the hotel, placing one's boots outside the door is equivalent to their immediate disappearance; and when travelling, the smallest supply of food you may have with you disappears as though by magic. The German postal service itself, which used to be regarded as the most honest in the world, steals likewise, and to say this is to say everything. With this lamentable collapse of the moral sense crimes abound: the brutal instincts exacerbated by famine and aroused by the recent slaughter are giving themselves a free vent, with a clearly marked tendency toward sadism. For in this cataclysm all the perversities of human nature are displayed with indifference, sanctioned by the incoherence of the law.

Facts of the same order, although not so serious, may be observed in France, and in classes of society hitherto noted for their honesty. According to the figures published by the Ministry of Public Works, the number of arrests for thefts committed by railway servants during

the last quarter of 1919 amounted to 2,231. In the same year the Orléans Railway Company paid fourteen million [1] francs as compensation for thefts, and the Paris–Lyons–Marseilles Company twenty-nine millions.[2] The defalcations in the postal service are also very heavy, but the amount is unknown.

An administrator of the Paris–Lyons–Marseilles Railway remarked, in the Chamber of Deputies, that "on the railways an increase in the staff of more than one-third resulted in a gross fall of more than 40 per cent. in the average returns."

In the same speech the deputy spoke also of "the bad citizens who are organizing a systematic underproduction because they see therein the prologue of the revolution."

The general collapse of morality is equally striking in the commercial world. A special tribunal had to be set up for the repression of profiteers attempting to make incredible profits. A newspaper published the total number of persons prosecuted and punished for fraudulent dealing or speculation in the year 1919. It amounted to 3,336 for the city of Paris alone.

This collapse of morality, I repeat, commonly follows great social upheavals, and wars in particular, which imply a reversal of moral standards.

But other causes of the present demoralization are worthy of mention.

Among the most active we must note first of all the extravagant increase of wages at a time when, the cost of things not being greatly increased by taxation, there was nothing to justify it.

We know that this was due to the intervention of a Socialist Minister entrusted with the control of the factories. To make himself popular he doubled, trebled and then quadrupled the wages of the workers, the majority of whom had made no demands, being only too thankful to find themselves in safety while their comrades were being killed at the front.

[1] £500,000 at the normal rate of exchange.
[2] £1,160,000 at the normal rate of exchange.

The repercussions of this disastrous measure were manifold and are still active.

At the very beginning they made it necessary for the factories to sell their products to the State at a much higher price than they had formerly done, and as a result our deficit was increased.

Thanks to these enormous increases of wages, every possibility of purchase was suddenly placed in the hands of the working class. The quantity of merchandise being limited, the result was a considerable rise of prices, and consequently a rapid diminution of the purchasing power of money. The other classes, being impoverished by this fact, assailed the Government with their demands, and all wages and salaries had to be increased. According to the figures recently published by the railway companies, the wages of their workmen, which before the war were 1,300 francs (£52), were increased to 6,000 francs (£240), nearly five times as much. Consequently the expenditure upon the staff of the railways increased from 750,000,000 francs (£30,000,000) to 3,000,000,000 francs (£120,000,000). This, of course, meant ruin to the railway companies, and therefore to the shareholders; and it became all the more difficult to repair this ruin in that the eight hours day necessitated an increased staff, while it was impossible to increase the price of transport indefinitely, as this would still further increase the cost of necessaries.

To cope with such burdens the State found itself compelled eventually to print seven or eight times as many bank-notes as had formerly existed. This inflation of the currency necessarily gave rise to the consequences which we see unfolding themselves at the present moment, the most serious of which is the diminution of the value of our bank-notes abroad, which forces us to pay three times their actual price for imported articles.

* * *

But these are only the purely material results. Their repercussion on the lowering of morality seems to be much more serious.

As wages rose the taste for luxury and distaste for work increased in enormous proportions.

The number of consumers provided with a surplus of money constantly increased, while the quantity of articles to be consumed did not increase, so that the price of the latter rose day by day. The shopkeepers, seeing on every hand customers rich enough to pay without counting their money, demanded ever-increasing profits. The great stores, which used to content themselves with a profit of 25 per cent., demanded 50, 100, 150 and even 200 per cent.

Everywhere, from the smallest tradesmen to the largest, there was a mad race for wealth, all the more perilous in that as the prices of things rose the workers demanded further increases of wages, which merely led to a further increase in the prices of merchandise and the profits of the middlemen.

As the taste for luxury increased, so day by day the distaste for work kept pace with it. The working day had to be reduced to eight hours, and during these eight hours the output was much less than formerly. I have already mentioned that in the railway workshops the work fell off by 40 per cent., while the thefts committed by railway servants were greatly multiplied.

It is interesting to note that a similar lowering of morality, under the influence of a temporary excess of wealth, was observed when under the old French monarchy Law's system flooded Paris with a deluge of bank-notes. As Duclos, the historian of the period, has pointed out, those who had formerly had no hope of founding their fortunes on anything but industry and economy now dreamed of nothing but speculation and set no bounds to their desires. The result was a general lowering of morality and an intense desire to make a fortune without working for it.

Then, as to-day, each fresh issue of notes corresponded with a fresh diminution of output and fresh cravings for enjoyment. Not without reason did an ingenious moralist write lately: "The most immoral institution in Paris is

the printing works whence emerges the unending stream of bank-notes."

The same causes produced the same results during the French Revolution. A newspaper cites the following passages from the works of Saint-Just. They are entirely applicable to the present moment:

> Everyone who had plenty of paper worked so much the less, and morality was enfeebled by idleness. The number of workers employed increased with the diminution of industry. In proportion as men became richer and worked less, demands increased and supply decreased.
>
> The condition in which we are now is precarious; we are spending with crazy prodigality. Three hundred million francs (£12,000,000) are issued monthly by the Public Treasury but do not return thither. They are destroying the love of work and of sacred unselfishness that constitutes the Republic.

We all remember how the story of the *assignats* ended. Their value finally fell to zero, causing almost universal ruin. But this did not prevent, any more than it is preventing to-day, the formation of a class of *nouveaux riches*, whose luxury and insolence contributed largely to the deplorable reputation of the Directoire and the downfall of the system of government.

From the general idleness and the love of expenditure created by exaggerated wages there has resulted further an insufficiency of production which is leading to the importation not only of the food-stuffs in which we are lacking, but also of a host of absolutely useless luxuries, such as perfumes.

This situation has greatly shocked the Americans, who finally declared officially, in plain terms, that they would make us no further advances nor give us any further credit.

England did not express herself in the same words, but she showed by her actions that we must henceforth count only on ourselves. Moreover, she did not hesitate to make us pay three times as much for coal as her own citizens are paying.

* * *

The facts relating to the only too perceptible lowering of morality throw a brilliant light upon the genesis of morality, a subject which has so greatly exercised the sagacity of the philosophers.

These facts show us to what an extent morality is the offspring not of rational logic, but of habits slowly accumulated by heredity and education. Morality—as the book-learned educationalist always forgets—is not really established until it has become unconscious.

We see to-day how the aggregate which constitutes morality becomes disintegrated when these habits are broken through. The simplest rules of social life, such as the payment of debts, respect for the property of others, commercial honesty, etc., seemed in normal times so natural that they were observed without discussion.

The various moratoria permitting people to refrain from paying their debts, the quick and exaggerated profits made, the excessive wages obtained for a steadily diminishing amount of work, the taste for luxury, etc., have disintegrated the old social scaffolding.

The old moral habits having lost their authority over the mind of the crowd, simple honesty has become an exceptional virtue.

The State alone retains a certain amount of prestige, because it has power at its disposal; but this power is being steadily undermined. Material forces which possess no moral elements to uphold them never last very long.

If the present relaxation of morality continues to increase we shall very soon discover what becomes of a society deprived of this support, ruled only by appetites and no longer tolerating constraint.

* * *

Apart from the mental and moral disturbances which it has provoked, the World War has also had the result of making more plainly visible those psychological elements which are characteristic of each individual people, and which are to be seen in all the manifestations of its industrial and social life.

Besides those incontestable qualities which enabled us

to resist a formidable invasion, we are, unquestionably, afflicted with certain defects: nervousness, dread of running risks, fear of responsibility, absence of initiative, love of routine, lack of co-ordination and many others, to the results of which we shall more than once call the reader's attention in the course of this volume.

The war has shown us the possibility of correcting some of these faults.

The French people (wrote a well-known neutral newspaper before the end of the war) was often regarded in the past as peculiarly nervous and impatient. The war will have destroyed a legend. It will also perhaps have matured men's minds. It would certainly seem that they must have been sufficiently tempered by the events of these fours years to remain, to the end, equal to all emergencies. The final result of the great conflict will very largely depend upon strength of mind, upon the ability to maintain a perfect equilibrium and to wait with patience. Henceforth patience is proof against anything.

This absence of nervous excitement was rather unexpected, for a war affecting all citizens alike might, on the contrary, have exaggerated emotional irritability with all its manifestations: enervation, impressionability, mental obsessions, anxiety, etc.

While it was sometimes perceptible at the beginning of the war, more especially among civilians in the rear, excessive emotionalism was unknown at the front. The repetition of the same affective shocks created in the combatant a true emotional immunity. He was soon vaccinated against all emotions and consequently against all weaknesses.

This immunity is not produced with the same rapidity in all peoples. It was established almost instantaneously in the Americans, who used to be regarded as extremely pacific, but to whom the atavistic habit of effort had given a great power of volition. For them the vaccine producing emotional immunity does not proceed from the recurrence of the same dangers, but simply from will-power and love of effort. Everything is possible to the power of volition. In his recent *Memoirs* Marshal Hindenburg asserts that this is the most precious quality

that a man can possess. I have repeated this statement in my books too often to return to it yet again.

As we proceed with our examination of the problems created by the war, the part played by psychological influences appears increasingly important. We are constantly obliged to refer to them in order to throw a little light upon the vast chaos of uncertainties by which the world is surrounded. Material forces impress us by their magnitude; but they are only the outward manifestations of the moral powers that direct our destiny.

CHAPTER IV

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CAUSES OF INDUSTRIAL INFERIORITY

We have already explained the part played by the mentality of a nation in its development; but it must never be forgotten that the qualities which have caused prosperity in the various phases of civilization are not always the same. Some, whose utility is but small at one period, may be preponderant at another. The nations provided with the qualities necessary to a higher stage of civilization will advance, while those which do not possess them will decline.

Many examples justify these fundamental propositions. One of the most striking is furnished by an examination of the causes of the stagnation and only too frequent decadence of French industry before the war. Although apparently of many kinds, these causes were in reality derived from a small number of defects of character which were identical in all branches of industry.

In connection with a subject of such supreme importance —for the future of our country depends upon it—personal opinions are inadequate. A long and minute inquiry conducted by various specialists was indispensable.

This inquiry into the condition of French industry before the war was undertaken at the instance of the *Association nationale d'Expansion économique*, which counted among its members many prominent manufacturers. It directed a number of specialists to make a thorough investigation of our great industries and to record the results of their inquiry in a series of reports.

The collected reports already fill sixty volumes, and, demonstrate two fundamental points: Firstly, they prove that our industries were in a state of decadence before

the war; secondly, they show that this decadence was principally due to psychological causes.

These psychological causes are not of an intellectual nature; they are almost exclusively due to defects of character. The immediate deduction from this fact is that the pre-war situation can be modified, not by laws and regulations, but only by the transformation of certain mental habits.

The nation was not wholly ignorant of the industrial decadence described by the various members of the commission. I myself referred to it long ago in one of my books. I was particularly struck by it in consequence of an inquiry into the state of certain branches which I made as a member of the jury of admission appointed to examine the scientific instruments exhibited in the Paris Exposition of 1900.

At that period our manufacturers were already ceasing to produce a great many articles, and were confining themselves to selling at a profit apparatus made in Germany. The manufacture of clinical thermometers, for example, and the preparation of a vast number of chemical and pharmaceutical products were dying out in France.

All these observations produced no result. Not until the war broke out was the extent of Germany's economic invasion revealed. But for the military conflict which interrupted trade with Germany, we should soon have witnessed the final destruction of a large number of our industries.

I cannot give a summary of all the commission's reports. I will confine myself to examining some of the data relating to important manufactures in which we used to be pre-eminent.

* * *

Cotton Spinning and Weaving.—The thread-making industry is extremely important. M. Guillet, the author of the report, informs us that it used to produce 520 million francs' (£20,800,000) worth of thread per annum. It was lacking neither in money nor in raw material. Yet its prosperity was rapidly declining,

principally because there was no solidarity among the manufacturers, who were unable to come to a mutual understanding and act in combination.

As a result of their narrow individualism the owners of the spinning-mills concerned themselves only with individual interests, without thinking of general requirements. "They competed in the home markets, often practising dumping outside their own territory on the national market. There is no real understanding between the employers; they are unacquainted with the value of corporative grouping in order to defend their interests."

As for woven fabrics, the writer of the report remarks that "most of the countries which formerly obtained their supplies from us are now tending to suffice to themselves."

Now, this trade cannot exist without exportation, by reason of the inadequacy of the home market; yet, says the investigator, "this exportation is regarded as a makeshift. We export a few of our more expensive products at random, and they have to compete with those of the Germans, who are better informed than we as to the requirements of our customers."

Like most of the authors of these reports, M. Guillet lays stress upon the part played by the German banks, which, by their advances, greatly facilitate the trade of their compatriots, while ours give our manufacturers no assistance.

The same observer also notes the incapacity of our consuls in the matter of furnishing information. Their uselessness from this point of view was preposterous. I have never, in all my travels, found a French consul capable of giving me any information upon any subject whatever. I had always to apply to the British consuls, who had a wonderful mass of data available.

The Woollen Industry.—This industry plays an enormous part in our foreign trade, for in 1913 France exported 600 million francs' (£24,000,000) worth of wool or woollen fabrics.

Unhappily, as M. Romier, the author of the report, points out, this industry had diminished by nearly a

third in the space of fifteen years, while the exports of British and German cloth were steadily increasing.

The causes of this decadence reside, says M. Romier, in the inefficiency of the agents and the general machinery of our foreign trade, and the inability of our producers to work in association.

M. Romier says further: "The French export trade is characterized by the fact that each individual house, left to its own devices, ill-served by the State, even worse supported by the banks, and regarded with jealousy by its competitors, has to defend itself exclusively by means of its own resources."

The author also points out that in all industries our exporters come into collision with competitors who, thanks to the help of their banks, are able to give long credit. The result is "that for many years the commissioned agents were practically in supreme control of the exports of French woollen stuffs. Now, it is a well-known fact that an industry which is at the mercy of middlemen is an industry doomed to decadence. We know, moreover, that close relations existed between the Parisian agencies and the German trade and banks. Almost all our business with South America was negotiated through England or Germany, and in the long run the French manufacturers would have become mere makers of woollen fabrics subservient to the wishes of the foreigner."

Ready-Made Clothing.—The importance of this industry likewise is considerable, since the annual production of clothing for men, women and children attains the value of 400 million francs (£16,000,000), to which we must add about 200 millions (£8,000,000) representing the value of linen and other underwear.

The author of the report shows us that the clothiers "remain obstinately divided." He lays stress upon "the scattered and individualistic organization of the secondary industries in France." The clothiers and wholesale outfitters have not yet been able to devise a methodical system of collaboration with the manufacturers of cloth and linen; hence the decline of their trade.

Luxury Trades, Fashions and Artificial Flowers.—The trade in Parisian fashions, fancy goods, etc., says M. Coquet in his report, still retained its reputation, but like other trades it was greatly threatened by foreign competition. Here again, as with the majority of our commercial undertakings, there was a complete absence of solidarity and co-ordinated effort.

" To defend itself effectually, the millinery trade realizes that it ought to be better organized with a view to collective action. Now, it is extremely difficult to combine the *maisons de mode* in a trust, or rather, when once combined these houses would not act with the necessary method and unity of effort."

As for the artificial flower industry, which had so long been a French speciality, it had ceased to be so, and was rapidly disappearing before German competition.

" Here again the Germans have sought to defeat us in the world market, and even in our own market, by creating large and well-equipped factories which manufacture the articles wholesale and employ a great many workers, while the French industry, except for a small number of wholesale houses, has remained a domestic industry, like that of toy-making."

The Germans, as M. Coquet informs us, have specialized in this industry to such an extent that there are large German factories which make only one variety of artificial flower—the violet or forget-me-not, for example.

Electrical Plant and Material.—In all branches of electrical supplies the Germans had rapidly outstripped us. " In 1907," writes M. Schuller in his report, " Germany sent us 2,100,000 kilogrammes of electrical material and 50,200,000 kilogrammes in 1913." The author attributes our inferiority partly to the timidity of our manufacturers and their slowness in delivery. The Germans were able to deliver in less than two months electric plant for which the French makers would require a year.

The Germans had enormous factories equipped with laboratories for research work, in which they were able to manufacture articles *seriatim* in large quantities.

These undertakings yielded the shareholders more than 10 per cent.

Jewelry and Watchmaking.—Jewelry, which for a long time was one of the most celebrated of the French *articles de luxe,* is made in larger quantities by Germany, as regards the ordinary and the more valuable qualities alike. In a few years the Germans quadrupled their exports and began to invade our own markets. "In 1893," writes M. Berthoud, "Germany sent us 76 kilogrammes of jewelry and 4,000 kilogrammes in 1913."

The German exports to foreign countries were ten times as large as ours.

The author clearly demonstrates the causes of our failure. One of the most important is the idea so general in France that inferior articles may be produced for export, while the Germans take the greatest pains with the articles intended for their foreign customers.

The report goes on to speak of the lack of initiative displayed by our manufacturers, who seem unable to replace their old models, and their inability to combine. As they never have direct representatives abroad they are compelled to rely upon commission agents, who, by absorbing part of the profits, force them to raise their prices.

The author plainly states the psychological qualities which have made the Germans so successful: "Energy, tenacity, reasoned audacity and a sound practical training."

Watchmaking.—The data relating to watchmaking are no more encouraging. The inquiry showed that German competition was tending "to destroy our national manufacture." For example, one important centre, Morez, which used to make 120,000 movements per annum, was producing only 30,000 on the outbreak of the war.

These results were due to the makers' adherence to rule-of-thumb, their refusal to modify their old methods of work, and their absence of initiative.

The Germans have flooded the world with examples of

the clockmaker's art, such as chiming clocks, invented in France, but which our manufacturers have absolutely ceased to produce.

The author of the report rightly recommends our manufacturers to combine in order to set up better-equipped workshops, but at the same time he gives examples showing that the combinations hitherto attempted have failed. He also calls attention to the fact that the quality of our products was often unsatisfactory.

The conquest of the French market by German clocks and watches was rapidly effected. It was only in 1902 that the Germans began to compete with us. "Always applying the same system of large workshops provided with an improved mechanical equipment, they produced all sorts of movements wholesale and in series."

* * *

I need not continue the summary of these inquiries. The results are the same in almost all our industries and their psychological causes are identical. Even in respect of products of which we seemed to have the monopoly, such as wines, Germany, although not a great wine country, was becoming a great centre of exportation. Hamburg, for example, was on the way to rival Bordeaux.

To this general decadence, which was resulting in a progressive diminution of their profits, our manufacturers were apparently resigned.

They would be greatly mistaken if they supposed that with the advent of peace matters would resume their pre-war course, and that they might still content themselves with daily diminishing profits, which nevertheless would still afford them a meagre livelihood. M. David-Mennet warns them plainly in the preface to the voluminous report which preceded the inquiry of which I have given a summary. Having demonstrated the feebleness of our efforts and our dread of risks, he adds:

> It must not be supposed that this somewhat restricted prosperity with which we have been content could have been maintained indefinitely. It was slowly and gradually diminishing, unperceived, before the daily increasing predominance of our German competitors.

French manufacturers were ceasing to manufacture, and were becoming mere warehousemen for their German rivals. Foreign or even French representatives were introducing imported products to our consumers. No country could long resist this continuous penetration, which was becoming increasingly rapid. The cuttlefish was crushing us in its tentacles and would finally have strangled us.

* * *

Many of the psychological defects which I have mentioned in the course of this chapter were recognized in a speech delivered before the Society of Industrial Chemistry by a Minister.

Complaining of a spirit of routine against which the State is powerless, the speaker remarked that our manufacturers would not abandon "the methods of work handed down from father to son, which assured them of returns with which they were content, although these were far lower than those which a methodical effort might have attained."

One result of this love of routine, added the Minister, is "the practice of the minimum of effort, which has gradually forced upon us the use of German products."

Having shown that the causes of Germany's industrial prosperity are to be found principally in the intimate union of science and industry, the speaker continued: "The victory of the armies would be in vain if we did not from this moment assure ourselves of the means of victory in the province of economics."

* * *

The foregoing analyses prove that the general causes of our industrial insufficiency are indeed of a psychological order, since this insufficiency results, as the inquiry has proved, from certain defects of character which are identical in all our industries.

Among the most disastrous we may count the absence of solidarity, which renders the manufacturer incapable of disciplined and co-ordinated collective effort; the spirit of routine, which makes it impossible for him to introduce any change in established methods; and the dread of incurring risks, the timidity and the lack of initiative which make him fearful of large undertakings.

Our lack of solidarity is a very old story. Colbert remarked upon it long ago. In one of his memoirs the famous Minister bitterly deplores "that the French, the most civilized people in the world, should find it so hard to endure one another, that combination among them should be so difficult and their associations so unstable, and that the most favourable ventures should come to naught in their hands by I know not what fatality."

In German industry banks, factories and export houses were associated with a common aim. There was no dread of risks, as combination made it possible to share responsibilities. All individual initiative was encouraged because the associations called upon to exploit it realized its value.

* * *

It results from all the foregoing data that the most necessary of reforms would be a change of mentality. This could only be produced by a new system of education, very different from our wretched University [1] teaching. Above all, this education ought to develop the will, solidarity, the faculty of concentration, the love of work and continuity of effort.

These qualities, modest enough to all seeming, were never the subject of any of the illusory diplomas of which we are so proud. Nevertheless, in the present phase of the world's evolution they will play a preponderant part.

I have cited elsewhere the following passage from the English author, Benjamin Kidd, who, after showing that France was "at the head of the intellectual nations of the West," pointed out that in the colonial wars between France and England which occupied the second half of the eighteenth century, France was continually forced to retreat, while England was constantly enlarging her territory. Then, examining the qualities which enabled England to found her vast Empire, Kidd continues:

The qualities which made these results possible were neither

[1] In France the whole system of State schools and colleges is known as the University of France.—*Trans.*

brilliant nor intellectual. . . . They are not qualities which impress the imagination. They are, above all, strength and energy of character, honesty and integrity, simple devotion and the idea of duty. Those who attribute the enormous influence which the English-speaking peoples have acquired in the world to the Machiavellic manœuvres of their leaders are often very far from the truth. This influence is largely the result of qualities which have nothing brilliant about them.

The economic struggle into which the nations have entered since our military victory may be even more disastrous to some of them than was the war itself.

We must never tire of repeating this. But what we must above all repeat is that ruin will most certainly overtake those countries in which the ideals of State intervention are developed. And these ideals are intensified daily by the pressure of Socialistic theories.

If, thanks to a technical and moral education adapted to our present needs, we succeed in transforming the mentality of the generation about to be born, we shall at the same time transform the future of our country. But in order to do this we must get rid of the disastrous illusion that the State, by virtue of some mysterious power, is capable of efforts of which its citizens show themselves to be incapable.

CHAPTER V

THE PROBLEM OF ADAPTATION

THE discoveries of science have enabled us to reconstitute those creatures, anterior to the appearance of man, which, during untold centuries, followed one another on our planet.

With each fresh geological period, species appeared so different from those that preceded them that at first sight their transformation seems incapable of explanation unless we admit the possibility of a series of successive creations.

A more advanced science revealed the relationship of all these so dissimilar forms, but the mechanism of their transformation is still doubtful.

It used to be thought that it could be explained by the necessities of the struggle for life leading to the selection of the fittest. Recent discoveries have resulted in other hypotheses.

Whatever the mechanism of the transformations observed, they appear, in the last resort, to be the result of an adaptation to the changes of environment which were produced by the evolution of the world. Nature is constantly confronting her creatures with this imperious dilemma: to achieve adaptation or to disappear.

* * *

The law of adaptation which controls the evolution of the animal kingdom also controls the development of human societies. Archæology has discovered the ruins of great capitals buried under the sands and long forgotten. During their splendour they seemed builded for eternity, but after filling the world with the voice of their fame they decayed and then disappeared, so completely

that their very site was for centuries unknown. The curiosity of modern science was needed to discover the traces of the gigantic cities in which whole periods of human history were made, such as Nineveh and Babylon.

But it was not only in an antiquity thus remote that these ephemeral splendours arose and afterwards vanished. After a period of absolute power Rome ceased to rule the world. Great empires, European and Asiatic, far-famed of old, are now known only to the historians. The kingdoms of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane submerged Asia for a moment only. Not for long did the world marvel at the empires of Charlemagne and Charles V. Yet this latter was so vast that, in the words of his chroniclers, the sun never set upon it.

Of the various causes which determined the disappearance of all these ephemeral powers, one of the most constant was their inability to adapt themselves to the new conditions of existence which were produced by evolution. In obedience to one of the supreme laws of the world, they perished because they failed to adapt themselves.

* * *

Examples drawn from the present age will show us how the lack of adaptation which condemned so many nations to disappear may manifest itself.

On examining the reasons of national greatness in the different periods of history, we find that they vary greatly with the period. The qualities necessary in an illiterate feudal baron differed greatly from those required a few centuries later, when literary and artistic qualities constituted the principal elements of greatness. Certain aptitudes which were destined to play a preponderating part in our own days were then regarded as of little value.

With the evolution of the world fresh capacities have become necessary. The modern age has created a civilization of an industrial type, dominated by a complicated technique which demands precisely those qualities of patience, discipline and vigilant attention which of old were regarded as of secondary importance.

In all that concerns industry—and everything, even to warfare, is industrialized nowadays—patience, attention and collective discipline are the indispensable faculties.

And this is why peoples like the Germans, who have never shone in the past by their taste and their intelligence, but possessing, thanks to their hereditary aptitudes and their military and technical training, the qualities which I have just mentioned, have proved to be so well adapted to modern industrial developments that in a short time they have climbed from a somewhat inferior level to the foremost ranks of civilization.

* * *

One of the great problems of our destiny is this: How can individualistic peoples, keenly intelligent but incapable of sustained collective efforts, adapt themselves to the necessities of the industrial evolution of the world, a process which has not only continued since the war, but will assuredly assume a more rapid pace?

To judge of the possibility of such an adaptation we must inquire how far these same peoples have achieved, during the war, a strict adaptation to conditions of existence of a wholly unforeseen character.

The rapidity with which they have complied with the unprecedented necessities which confronted them allows us to hope for a future industrial transformation comparable to our military transformation.

A few pages will suffice to demonstrate the importance of the adaptation achieved by the great nations which were opposed to the Germanic invasion.

* * *

The case of France is one of the most striking. The foremost victim of the German aggression, she had to make gigantic and extremely difficult efforts of adaptation, for such efforts were contrary to her institutions and her temperament.

The war—as we know only too well—surprised us almost disarmed, so that we had to create, in every detail, the formidable amount of military material in which we were lacking.

One may obtain some idea of the difficulties which France had to overcome, difficulties not only of a technical but also of a bureaucratic order, from the following extracts taken from the remarkable report read in the Chamber of Deputies on December 29, 1916, by M. Viollette:

In February 1915, when Parliament heard the truth from its Commissions, it learned:

1. That the factories were still for the most part closed and all the specialists mobilized.

2. That the manufacture of rifles was *nil*. Not a single rifle had been made since the declaration of the war, and no one knew where to find the dies, gauges, etc., for their manufacture.

The same speaker reproduced in his report a letter addressed to the Minister of War by General Pédoza, dated March 15, 1915, of which these lines are a fragment:

The country would be absolutely stupefied if it were to learn that from the beginning of the war up to March no more than 250 new rifles in all had been manufactured.

It was only when the Administration decided to appeal to industry that the situation was modified. The following passage from M. Viollette's report shows how difficult bureaucrats, whose minds were too limited to allow them to believe in a long war, found it to make up their minds to apply to the manufacturers:

Yes, the future will tell what patience, what efforts, what threats, what intimidation even we had to employ to insist upon the manufacture of rifles, guns, ammunition and explosives.

It was a daily battle, ardent and often violent, and the Commissions had to extort by fragments the truth which a routine-ridden bureaucracy concealed from them by truly astonishing documentary devices.

Where would France be at the present moment if she had not had her Parliament?

The adaptation of the rulers, although very gradual, was eventually accomplished. Directly the assistance of the manufacturers was accepted, development was rapidly effected. We may truthfully state that our industry

saved the country. It displayed, thanks to the collaboration of superior and individual minds, unsuspected qualities of initiative, ingenuity and perseverance.

The military art itself, although rooted in ancient traditions, finally adapted itself to a tactics which was not in any way mysterious, but which we had no opportunity of investigating before the war.

The civilian population likewise succeeded in adapting itself to the necessities arising from the almost complete mobilization of our artisans and agricultural workers. They had to be replaced by women, old men and children. All displayed remarkable powers of adaptation.

* * *

The example of adaptation provided by England was as striking as that of France. Not only did she possess neither weapons nor material, but her citizens regarded universal military service with horror. Extremely proud of their independence, they had never accepted anything but armies of mercenary soldiers.

To transform the British mentality required a terrible effort. It took Great Britain nearly two years to organize a great army.

This effort was rendered possible only by the psychological qualities of the race: indomitable tenacity, a sense of duty and a sense of honour. To these we may add a stoical acceptation of destiny when it seems inevitable.

Many have noted, with a touch of derision, the meticulous habit of personal attention and the love of comfort which characterize the English, but, as an interpreting officer, M. Pozzi, who has lived a great deal with them has justly remarked: "The English consider that distinction of bearing and of manner are commonly associated with distinction of feeling. They also maintain that we should enjoy the present moment without allowing ourselves to be troubled long beforehand by the prospect of eventualities which may perhaps never be realized."

The psychology of the English, and above all their tenacity, were never understood by the Germans. This was particularly evident when they imagined that Great

Britain, exhausted by her losses, would accept peace at any price. The past, however, might have taught them that England, though sometimes slow to engage in an undertaking, never draws back once she has done so. This she proved in her difficult conquest of India; and again by fighting for twenty years against the greatest general known to history.

Our watchword during the war: *Tenir !* (Hold fast !) was England's also.

* * *

The United States afford as striking an example as England of rapid adaptation to absolutely unforeseen conditions of life. They, too, were successful by virtue of inherited characteristics.

Never, perhaps, in the course of the ages has a nation undergone such profound mental transformations in a few months as did the United States.

Before the war the military power of the States was so negligible that they felt themselves incapable of quelling the insolence of the brigand leaders who were governing Mexico. The very idea of military conscription would have evoked unanimous protests.

During the first years of the European War the sole aim of the United States was carefully to maintain their neutrality and to enrich themselves by furnishing merchandise to the combatants. Thanks to a very active propaganda and the purchase of a large number of influential newspapers, Germany succeeded in creating a great many sympathizers in the States.

Anxious to maintain this precious neutrality, President Wilson respected the Kaiser's susceptibilities to the point of sending him a congratulatory telegram on his birthday. Further, he was opposed to all proposals for organizing an army.

It took Germany's prodigious misconception of psychology and her stupendous infatuation to bring a nation so anxious for peace into the war. The President having confined himself to protesting timidly in harmless notes against the torpedoing of American vessels, Germany felt

confident that she had nothing to fear from the States.

Yet the time came when, contrary to all expectation, American opinion, at first indifferent, then irritated, ended by a complete reversal. The people understood what sort of a tyranny the world would be threatened with were Germany to win the war.

The President, whose opinions had also undergone development, did not then hesitate to lead his country into the most terrible crisis that a great nation had ever entered upon.

To declare war was not enough. The country had to make war. Thanks to the vigour of its character, the American people, despite its love of comfort and independence, was able in a few months to adapt itself to all the necessities involved by such a conflict.

Its devotion was absolute. Accepting entirely novel conditions of existence, it renounced all the liberties of which it was so proud, subjected itself to the abnormal despotism of the State, to severe privations, and above all to that obligatory military system of which the very idea had formerly seemed intolerable to it.

All sorts of inconveniences were suffered without a murmur. No taxation seemed too heavy, and in the trenches of Europe the improvised American soldiers acquitted themselves as valiantly as the best.

* * *

The adaptation to military necessities of which I have just given a few examples is not all that is needed. With the end of the war came the need of adaptation to economic and commercial conditions, which is perhaps even more difficult to effect than adaptation to military requirements.

The facts observed during the course of the World War give us reasons for abundant hope. Yet it must not be supposed that the power of adaptation in one direction will necessarily manifest itself in all other directions. We have already noted that the nations display very different capacities in respect of various forms of adaptation.

Germany affords us a remarkable example. Her adaptation to the material necessities of the industrial development of the modern world was obviously complete, but no less obviously her adaptation to the moral development of civilization was far from being accomplished.

She presented—and without a doubt it was the first time in history that such a thing had been seen—the type of a high scientific and industrial civilization superimposed upon low moral conceptions which have long been left behind.

We must, indeed, go back to the remotest phases of history to find a nation exhibiting such ferocity combined with such a complete contempt for pledges. Even in the periods regarded as semi-barbaric, women, old men and monuments were spared and the word of honour was regarded as sacred.

The stoicism of the consul Regulus remains a typical example of the ancient respect for the sworn oath. If the Carthaginians were so greatly despised it was precisely because of their bad faith. The memory of " Punic faith " survived the destruction of Carthage, just as the bad faith of Germany will always survive in history.

It is only among primitive peoples that the absolute right of might, which in our days is still professed by the Germans, is exercised without restraint. It prevails in the animal kingdom and among inferior peoples, but was tending toward progressive elimination by the progress of a civilization to which even the Germans will eventually be forced to adapt themselves. The necessities of adaptation have always governed the world and will, without a doubt, dominate it more and more in the future.

BOOK II

CONFLICTING PRINCIPLES IN MODERN WARFARE

CHAPTER I

THE INFLUENCE OF IDEAS IN NATIONAL CONFLICTS

For a long while classical psychology was a theoretical science without practical application. No reply was given to such questions as these: How do opinions and beliefs arise and subsequently develop? What are the feelings of crowds and their motives of action?—and many others equally important.

Politicians, of course, have never disdained psychology. They have even been ready to boast of their knowledge of it, but in their eyes it was an art having no guide but intuition. One succeeded if one's intuitions were fortunate; if they were not, one failed.

Sovereigns likewise dabbled in psychology. Their knowledge of the subject was in reality rather summary, for it was limited to the simple conception that interest and fear were sufficient to govern a nation.

I endeavoured to demonstrate, a long time ago, in my *Political Psychology*, that the means of acting upon men are much more varied, that interest and fear are not the most potent means, that psychological factors are the soul of political doctrine, and that of all political blunders the most formidable are those of psychology.

The war has fully justified this last assertion. It was, as I cannot repeat too often, by an accumulation of psychological blunders that the Germans roused so many nations against them.

In the end, however, they learned by experience. They learned to handle psychological forces whose importance

had at first escaped them and succeeded in absolutely disintegrating a Russian army of many millions of men.

Before examining, in this volume, the methods by which the mind of the individual and the soul of the multitude may be influenced, I will now confine myself to demonstrating the part played by ideas in the course of the war which has but lately been fought to a finish, and their development.

* * *

The present age, despite its apparent positivism, is perhaps that in which ideas—and above all mystical ideas—have exerted the greatest influence. It was not for material interests but for principles that the great nations fought, and notably the United States.

The desperate character of the world-war and its duration can only be explained by considering the ideas which were at the bottom of it and the feelings from which these ideas were derived.

This war, as I have often repeated, was at once religious, philosophical and economic.

It was religious by virtue of the German people's conviction that God had appointed them to rule the world. It was philosophical because it was based on the principle that might comes before right, a principle defended by all the German philosophers and historians.

It was economic because it resulted, in part, from Germany's need of creating fresh outlets for her merchandise, a consequence of her industrial over-production. This economic factor reinforced the others, but was not the most powerful.

* * *

The partisans of the materialistic theory of history disregard the mystic influences and assert that peoples are led solely by their needs.

The part played by needs and the interests that arise from these needs cannot be disputed. There is no doubt, for example, that the great destructive invasions of Roman Gaul were due to famine, which drove the Germanic tribes from the marshes and the forests where

they had multiplied too extensively to find sufficient means of subsistence there.

But if we attentively follow the course of history we see that men allow themselves to be killed far more readily for ideas than for needs. The culminating events of the past—the Crusades, the birth of Islam, the wars of religion, the French Revolution, and many more—were engendered by ideas. It is ideas, in short, that govern the world, making or destroying civilizations and empires.

* * *

Two great ideals were in conflict during the late war: the ideal of absolutism and hegemony on the one hand and the ideal of independence on the other.

Thus presented, the formula is accurate but incomplete.

The pure idea, as conceived by Plato, has no virtue in itself. It remains an ineffectual phantom until it is enveloped in affective and mystic elements capable of transforming it into a belief.

Accordingly, although the statement of an idea may be briefly formulated, the enumeration of the elements from which its power is derived is often somewhat lengthy. The idea of hegemony, stated in a single word, possesses an extremely complex content: feelings of pride and ambition, the need of enriching oneself by conquest, the desire to accomplish a divine mission, etc.

The fundamental ideas that guide mankind, above all the religious ideas, eventually dominate all the elements of a civilization.

But beside the general ideas that direct the life of the nations and to which, in the long run, atavism gives a great deal of power, there are other ideas of ephemeral duration which readily come into being, develop and disappear under the influence of education, environment and mental contagion.

They are ephemeral, but they may none the less play a considerable part, engendering revolutions and overturning all the factors of social life. Thus our Latin Socialism, and the industrial decadence which is one of its principal consequences, are governed by a small

number of ideas which are quite false but extremely powerful: general equality, class conflict, dictatorship of the proletariat, etc.

* * *

The great fundamental ideas which are like beacons directing the nations sometimes change in the course of the ages, but they do not change unless the social life of the nation is transformed. As soon as a people changes its ideals it is bound by virtue of this fact alone to change its institutions, its philosophy, its literature and its arts.

We cannot yet say what leading ideas will emerge from this war. It is doubtful whether they will be prevailingly optimistic. We have travelled a long way since the period when the philosophers of the French Revolution taught the original goodness of man, and, in the hope of refashioning the ancient forms of society proposed as a model, destroyed the timeworn equipment of the world in which they were living.

The ideals whose development the future will behold will probably be derived from the universal desire for social structures regarded as capable of protecting the nations from the catastrophes against which their institutions have proved to be so helpless. A pessimistic longing for change has invaded them since, the war being ended, they have numbered the ruins and counted the graves.

Whatever the new ideals may be, we may suspect that it will be difficult to control them.

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The German rulers themselves eventually understood, towards the end of the war, that ideals were taking shape before their eyes which they would soon be unable to control. They were also forced to realize that the philosophical theory which represented might as the sole source of right had raised against Germany all the leading nations of the world.

They at last saw dimly that wars of conquest cannot constitute ideals in the present phase of mankind and that the peoples required other ideals.

Blinded though the ruling castes of Germany were by

their mystic belief in the Teutonic hegemony, they did at length realize that the feudal and military system of Germany, superimposed upon an intensive industrial development, was placing the country on a different plane to that of the other nations, and consequently was threatening it with perpetual conflicts with the latter.

One thing is certain: the traditions of these classes are not as yet sufficiently shaken to enable them to accept a democratic system implying liberty and equality. However, we see them reduced to borrowing an increasing number of terms from the vocabulary of the democratic nations and to employing them in their declarations, while they are obliged in appearance to accept all the aspirations of the multitude.

These aspirations ended, towards the close of the war, by rousing the Germanic masses to revolt. When whole peoples see the flower of their youth perishing and have to suffer the most frightful privations to satisfy the ambitions of a sovereign and a military caste, they finally ask themselves whether it would not be better for them to emerge from the hell into which their masters have plunged them.

Then it is that divergencies appear, and increase day by day, between the ideas of the rulers, who believe that they have everything to gain by prolonged warfare, and those of the subjects, who have everything to lose.

* * *

This interesting conflict was observed in several countries.

Russia, composed of heterogeneous populations whose mentality was still unsettled, was the first to withdraw from the struggle, when the discipline disappeared that had lent these amorphous masses a certain cohesion. The social armament crumbled at a touch and chaos resulted.

Composed likewise of heterogeneous races, but on a higher mental level, Austria held out longer.

Germany, where heredity, the barracks and the schools had enslaved men's minds, was of all our enemies that one whose moral resistance was most prolonged. Yet in spite of fifty years of militarization, in spite of the

power of the militaristic and feudal party, in spite of the still highly influential sect of Pan-Germans, a complete scission occurred between the partisans of a peace by conciliation and those of annexations and indemnities.

These latter, convinced of Germany's divine mission, still exercised a very great influence. The realities of the situation, however, eventually annihilated them.

In this German population, exhausted by affliction, privation and calamity, and more conscious every day that it was, for its masters, merely "human material," "cannon fodder," democratic ideals eventually sprang up, with their consequences, and peace was quickly enforced.

We may convince ourselves of the progress of the new theories by comparing the German writings published at the beginning of the war with those that appeared at its close. In 1914 the ideals of fraternity, the League of Nations and disarmament were regarded by our enemies as contemptible twaddle unworthy of being discussed. But they arrived at the stage of discussing them, and finally insisted on them.

* * *

Directly ideas begin to crystallize in a nation's mind their power rapidly increases, and they finally acquire irresistible power and overthrow all obstacles.

One of the characteristics of the present war, and one that is almost unique in history, was the enforcement of peace in several countries by the peoples, in opposition to their rulers.

We saw this clearly in Russia, who, anxious for peace at any price, lined up behind the political party that promised it.

Austria, too, was forced to make peace despite her masters; Germany likewise, but only when all hope of victory was dead.

German militarism, long though it retained the power of defending itself against artillery, ended by becoming helpless when attacked by thought. Once again in the history of the world ideas triumphed over the material forces which sought to subdue them.

CHAPTER II

THE PHILOSOPHIC BASES OF PAN-GERMANISM

THE German diplomatists have proved themselves to be notably skilful in adopting the language of their adversaries, insisting with them upon projects of universal brotherhood, the creation of international tribunals and so forth. We may judge of the genuineness of this pacifism by the enunciation of the principles formulated by German writers not only before the war, but also at the present moment.

It would be a dangerous illusion to imagine the Pan-Germanists as a limited group opposed to the rest of the nation, the latter remaining more or less pacifist. A recital of the philosophic teachings propagated by the Universities, which guided the mentality of modern Germany, will quickly dispose of such an error.

It was in the works of the German philosophers, and notably in those of Hegel, that the theory of the absolute right of might was elaborated, whence emerged the Pan-Germanic religion with its aspirations toward a world-wide hegemony.

That Pan-Germanism is a religion endowed with the power bestowed by a mystic faith is a matter that admits of no doubt. Yet this truth should be repeated, lest we should entertain illusions as to the possibility of destroying militarism, the fundamental support of this faith.

The German historians merely applied to politics the doctrines of the philosophers. The two most celebrated, Treitschke and Lamprecht, taught, in the name of the right of might, that Germany was destined to conquer many other countries.

The popular propagandists, such as Bernhardi, Lasson

and many others, merely spread these principles broadcast. We cannot accuse them of cynicism, since they spoke in the name of philosophical doctrines professed by the most highly qualified teachers of the Universities.

In its undertakings (wrote General Bernhardi) a State must take into account only one factor—force; and it must disdain such laws as are not to its advantage. It is might and not right that must settle the differences between great States. Treaties of arbitration are peculiarly pernicious to a powerful nation. Any court of arbitration would hinder our territorial expansion.

Professor Lasson is equally precise:

A State could not without disappearing allow of any tribunal above it whose decisions it would have to accept. Between States there are no laws. A law being merely a superior force, a State which should recognize it would confess its weakness. A war of conquest is as legitimate as a war of defence. A weak State readily shelters itself beneath the inviolability of treaties which assure its miserable existence. It has only one guarantee, a sufficient military force.

These theories are very well summed up in these words of another popular writer, Tannenberg: "Since we have the power we need not seek any other argument."

This same Tannenberg did not confine himself to proposing the conquest of Germany's rivals. Austria, for him, was one of the countries to be conquered. Having declared that "the Germans can expect nothing good from the House of Austria," he arrived at the conclusion, developed at great length with the assistance of corroborative maps, that it was an urgent matter "to transform the whole of Austria into Prussian provinces."

* * *

One might suppose that several years of carnage would have modified these ideas. On the contrary: recent German writings show that the German mentality is almost unchanged.

To be sure, the German diplomatists have adopted the formulæ of our ideology: arbitration, brotherhood

of nations, etc.; but their writers are careful to show how very little regard they have for such expressions. General Freytag-Loringhoven, in his book on the consequences of the world-war, explains that disarmament, arbitration, love of peace, etc., are simply articles of export for the use of the Allies. Pacifism, to him, is a madness, and on the conclusion of peace Germany must prepare a mighty army.

Few Germans have renounced the divine mission of ruling the world. Professor Harnack wrote towards the end of the war:

> Have we a civilization different from that of the other nations? Thank God, yes. Our enemies have a civilization which goes no deeper than the surface of things. Ours goes down to the root of things. Germanism is not merely a gift of Heaven. It imposes upon us a great and a heavy task. It is for us to trace the guiding lines which are to lead humanity to a real and profound unity.

* * *

This pretension to rule the world could only have been defensible if the peoples governed by the Germans had derived from their government the advantages that the Roman civilization bestowed of old. But while the Roman civilization dealt tenderly with conquered nations, respecting their institutions, their languages and their customs, the German domination has everywhere shown itself to be brutal and intolerant. Alsace, the Danish duchies and Poland, without speaking of the peoples of Africa, have learned this by experience. We know that in Poland, before the war, Prussia had commenced the methodical expulsion of the owners of the soil. During the war German writers proposed that the same measure should be applied to Alsace, whose inhabitants would have been replaced by German colonists.

We have seen what are Germany's real ideas, dissimulated behind a superficial pacifism. However, we need not regret her apparent conversion to principles so contrary to all her previous conceptions, for by appearing to accept them she has given them a great prestige in the eyes of the people. And the people, thanks to its mental

docility, has absorbed the new ideas expressed by its masters. After slowly germinating in the mind of the crowd, these ideas will eventually become powerful motives of action.

* * *

What ideas did the Entente oppose to the Germanic doctrines? Throughout the war the Allies demanded the destruction of German militarism. "We are fighting Prussian militarism," the Allied Ministers repeated.

The realization of this ideal presents some difficulty. Prussian militarism is not an opinion, but a belief. The Germans will no more renounce it than the Mussulmans could renounce Islam. In the history of the world there are no records of beliefs destroyed by force of arms, much less by arguments.

The Germans attribute to militarism a great part of their economic expansion. Let me quote from Dr. Helfferich, the ex-Vice-Chancellor of the Empire:

> Whosoever has had occasion to observe the various nations and examine their economic labours will not have failed to note the enormous influence which military service exerts in Germany over the common work in large establishments: almost all our manual workers and intellectuals having served with the colours, our people are accustomed to order, exactitude and discipline.

Several of these assertions are only partly correct. We may, in fact, object that the United States, formerly without an army or anything resembling militarism, boasted of an industrial development at least equal to Germany's.

However this may be, German opinion as to the value of militarism will be very difficult to modify, and for a long time to come we shall have to protect ourselves against it.

* * *

Leibnitz asserted that education could transform the mentality of a people in less than a century. This statement is not true of peoples whose mentality has been stabilized by a long past. The soul of a race is a very

stable thing. Education can guide it in a given direction, but cannot transform it.

Applied to such a nation as Prussia, composed of heterogeneous races—Germans, Slavs, Mongols, etc., whose ancestral characteristics are necessarily dissociated by cross-breeding—Leibnitz's assertion is justifiable.

The Prussian mind has been artificially created by four fundamental factors: the barracks, the schools, the influence of the philosophers and that of the historians. These various elements having acted in the same direction for several generations, their influence has been profound.

By mental contagion, the Prussian ideas spread all over Germany when, in order to establish national unity, she organized herself upon Prussia after 1870.

But this unification affected only certain accessory elements of the German character. Although Germany subjected herself completely to Prussia for the sake of the economic and political advantages which she derived from her subjection, we must not forget that the different races of the Empire remain divided by faith and feeling, and profess a profound antipathy for arrogant and overbearing Prussia.

Despite this antipathy and their ethnical dissimilarities, the federated German States were firmly attached to Prussia, since it was greatly to their interest to remain so. If this interest were to disappear the union would inevitably be dissolved. This was made evident by numerous symptoms of disaggregation which manifested themselves at the close of the war.

It would have been prudent to utilize these symptoms and to provoke the dissolution of the German Confederation. The Allies could have done so by taking advantage of their victories to refuse to negotiate with the German Empire, but only with the various kingdoms, Bavaria, Würtemberg, etc., which compose it. It would also have been a sensible policy to grant each of them different terms, and better ones than those accorded to Prussia. In this way Prussia would soon have been isolated. Unhappily, we have only consolidated the union of these peoples with Prussia, a union which it was

obviously to our interest to dissolve, and in a lasting fashion.

* * *

Given the philosophical conceptions prevailing in Germany, as summarized in this chapter, we see how impossible the peace by conciliation dreamed of by our Socialists would have been. It would have been the peace of a day only. As the German Emperor himself very truly said, the war was a merciless duel between two conceptions of the world, one of which had to disappear.

Lord Milner, in a speech delivered at Plymouth, expressed himself in a similar sense:

> The question is to decide whether Prussian militarism is to destroy us and sweep away all that the liberty-loving nations have for centuries striven to win, and are still striving.

All the rulers of the belligerent nations have stated the problem in the same terms.

> The past and the present (said President Wilson) are engaged in deadly conflict. There can be but one outcome of the struggle, and the settlement must be final; there can be no compromise. No indefinite decision would be endurable or conceivable.

The war had therefore to be continued until a defeated Germany would resign herself to accepting the conditions required of her.

In the peace proposals that preceded the armistice the German diplomatists returned to the idea of a League of Nations. They even proposed to place themselves at its head. It would thus have become a new form of their pretension to hegemony. These proposals were obviously insincere. The perusal of German publications, even apart from those of the militarists, shows, as I have already remarked, that the idea of a League of Nations and international courts of arbitration is absolutely contrary to the principles unanimously taught by the professors of the German Universities. All regard it as

a ridiculous heresy that a State should submit to external jurisdiction.

* * *

We do not know when or how the German mentality will be modified. Among the factors which may contribute to its transformation we may doubtless reckon the hatred which their barbarous actions have inspired throughout the world. Of this they are now aware. We may judge of this by some of their publications. In the review *Friedenswarte* for August 1918 Professor H. Fernau wrote:

> What depresses me more than ever is the knowledge that the German people is the most hated nation on the earth. This hatred is not a transient thing, and it has no precedent in the history of the nations. From the political and commercial point of view and also from the moral standpoint our prestige will be ruined for years to come. Who will give us back our mercantile marine, our overseas customers, our intellectual renown, all the myriad advantages which enabled us to compete with other nations, to make money—in a word, to live? Who will pay the debts caused by the war? The civil lists and the estates of the Crown and the landowners would be but a drop in the ocean of debt.

Never in all history have those who have striven for conquest received so stern a lesson as that which defeat has inflicted on the Germans. Such a lesson deserves to be meditated by such nations as may in future dream of imperialism and hegemony.

CHAPTER III

WAR-AIMS: ATTEMPTED AND ACHIEVED

WHEN the scholars of the future come to examine the documents relating to the conflict that ravaged the world they will be surprised by the accumulation of speeches relating to the objects of the war as well as by their vagueness and mutability.

The aims formulated were of course bound to vary with the different phases of the struggle. But we find, even at a given period and in connection with a given subject, a remarkable degree of uncertainty and fluctuation.

When the Allies, at the outset of the conflict, declared that it was their intention to destroy German militarism, they were setting forth an aim which was both vague and chimerical, for no victory could really destroy a faith held by seventy million human beings, and regarded by them as the very source, not only of their power, but also of their economic prosperity.

The Germans were equally vague, and also far from sincere when they pretended that their only object in the war was to defend their independence and to assure themselves of guarantees for this independence. They first declared that they had gone to war against the Russian barbarians, then against the naval domination of England, and then to prevent the economic encirclement of Germany. All these assertions were so inadmissible that the neutrals and Allies alike could justly accuse Germany of never having divulged her war-aims.

But events followed in swift succession; ideas underwent development; realities were weighing on the minds of the peoples; and gradually all the Governments came to state more precisely the aims which they were pursuing.

* * *

Let us first examine the war-aims of Germany.

In the beginning her pretensions were great. In Europe she wanted Belgium, the French mining districts, several French departments and all the French colonies. In the East she aspired to conquer Egypt, the Persian Gulf and Persia, and even dreamed of ruling over India. At least four thousand million pounds were to be demanded from her enemies.

As her plans of conquest on the Western front collapsed early in the war in the face of our resistance, these ambitions were restricted somewhat and varied with the different phases of the conflict.

They also varied in accordance with the aspirations of the various political parties whose influence was predominant.

All these parties were in pursuit of the same end: the hegemony of Germany. But each pursued it in a different fashion. The Pan-Germans, in whose ranks figured the military and feudal caste, aimed at obtaining it by means of indemnities and annexations. The manufacturers and the middle class dreamed of an economic peace which should assure them of the domination of the world's markets.

The Pan-Germans were the most influential, because they had on their side the large manufacturers who were living by the war, the University professors, and above all the feudal chiefs, who cared little for the economic situation.

Here are some extracts published by Herr Sauerwein which give us a good idea of the German attitude toward the various nations:

General Brossart von Schellendorf, ex-Minister of War in Prussia, wrote some years before the war:

"Between France and Germany there can be no question of anything but a duel to the death. The problem will be solved only by the destruction of one of these two antagonists. We shall annex Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Livonia, Trieste and Venice, and the north of France from the Somme to the Loire."

The geographer, Otto Tannenberg, wrote in 1911:

"Holland, Belgium and Switzerland are living comfortably at Germany's expense. Once the great score is settled with France

and England, then these small countries will have to be incorporated in Germany under conditions imposed by her."

Herr Ballin, Director-General of the Hamburg-Amerika Steamship Company, declared in 1915:

"In future we must have a base for our fleet which will command the North Sea."

Herr Bassermann, leader of the National Liberal Party, said in 1916:

"A Holland enclosed by German territory and a Belgium under German influence must and will quite naturally fall to Germany."

The famous Pan-Germanist, Treitschke, declared:

"It is incumbent upon German policy to reconquer the mouths of the king of rivers, the Rhine."

As for General von Bernhardi, his rival, in his book on *Germany and the Coming War* he remarked, in 1913:

"The Dutch no longer live for anything but profit and enjoyment, without object and without contest, and Germany finds herself deprived of her natural sources of wealth and of the mouth of the Rhine. Our political influence cannot increase until we have openly proved to our little neighbours that union with Germany is to their interest."

Austria, who had few annexations to hope for and suffered much more severely from the war than Germany, wanted a peace of conciliation, but found herself compelled to pursue the same policy as her arrogant ally.

Without Russia's treachery, Germany assuredly could not have continued the struggle much longer. This treachery opened up prospects for which she had not dared to hope. This explains her eagerness to negotiate with the gang of Russian revolutionaries who had seized the reins of power and to agree without raising difficulties to their peace terms: no annexations and no indemnity. Almost in possession of Poland, Lithuania, Courland, Esthonia and Livonia, which were reduced to the state of a protectorate—to say nothing of the economic vassalage of Russia—the Germans could not wish for more. For them the vast Russian Empire had become a well-stored granary.

* * *

The war-aims declared by the United States were usually presented in a somewhat idealistic form. This is how their President expressed them:

The object of this war is to liberate the free peoples from the menace of a formidable militarism in the service of an irresponsible Government, which, having secretly planned to dominate the world, has not been deterred in its attempts to realize its schemes by the respect due to treaties nor by the principles of international justice and honour which have so long been venerated by the civilized nations.

* * *

France is perhaps the country which has most exactly defined its war-aims. In the end she abandoned metaphysical dissertations upon rights and justice and the necessity of destroying German militarism. In a speech delivered in the Chamber of Deputies on December 27, 1917, our Minister for Foreign Affairs summed up our war-aims in the following words: Restitution of invaded territories; restoration of Alsace-Lorraine and reparation for damage done.

The question of Alsace-Lorraine was regarded by the Minister as not merely a French territorial problem, but as a moral problem, an alternative of right or might. "As it is solved in the French or the German sense, there will or will not be a new Europe constituted in conformity with the principles and the forces which are creating and guiding the nations of to-day."

In reality, Alsace-Lorraine had become the banner of a doctrine. This has not been very clearly realized by certain writers in the Allied countries.

It would matter little to an inhabitant of Chicago whether Alsace did or did not belong to France; but it would matter very much to him if Germany were to exercise a hegemony which would paralyse American trade.

Alsace, then, was the banner of international liberty. If it had remained in Germany's hands absolutism and militarism would have triumphed in the world. This would have meant the final defeat of the peoples opposing the domination of Prussia.

For this reason the Allies were determined never to give way in the matter of Alsace. Now, as the Germans were equally resolute, the war was bound to last until one

of the combatants was exhausted. When principles are opposed to principles the conflict is necessarily a protracted one. Such were the wars of religion in France and the Thirty Years' War in Germany. Such, again, was the War of Secession in the United States, which was prolonged until one of the two adversaries was absolutely ruined.

* * *

It is interesting to note the opinion of our war-aims held by the great Labour Parties of France and England.

The programme drawn up by the Committee of the Trade Unions and the Labour Party in England maintained that the German Government must make reparation for all damage done in Belgium, whose sovereignty would be restored in all its integrity. The question of Alsace-Lorraine should be decided by a plebiscite.

At the Congress of Clermont-Ferrand the French representatives of the General Confederation of Labour were dumb as regards the problem of Alsace-Lorraine.

* * *

In the foregoing pages we have examined only the war-aims pursued by the various belligerent countries, without considering those that were attained. In the case of certain countries—the United States, for example—the ends attained were very different from those which drew the nation into the war.

When the United States decided to fight, after the repeated torpedoing of their vessels, they had, as I have already remarked, so weak an army that Mexico could be arrogant with impunity and Japan outwit them. To-day the United States possess a considerable army, and their President is acquiring, for the time being, by the mere development of events and without having dreamed of such a thing, a position which the German Emperor dreamed of but could not attain.

Germany, for her part, thanks to the attitude of Russia, may possibly achieve aims that she scarcely dared to hope for previously. The vassalage of Russia which will

result from the treachery of the Communists will be highly profitable to Germany; but for a long time to come the economic energy of the Germans will be hampered by the hatred and distrust which all the nations feel for them. Moreover, while Germany used to have no rival but England, she has now seen two others come forward: the United States and Japan. For the immediate future the British hegemony will dominate Europe. The war, as a matter of fact, will merely have replaced the German hegemony by the British.

* * *

France, too, was destined to achieve certain objects which she had not sought. Without speaking of the possession of Alsace, her unshakeable and protracted resistance to a formidably armed invader has increased her prestige throughout the world, although her political and religious conflicts were beginning to tarnish it.

This enhancement of her moral reputation is not the only result which France has obtained from the terrible conflagration. The necessities of the war led her to renovate her very antiquated scientific and industrial methods. Necessity evoked in a few months transformations that no educational efforts could have obtained in time of peace. Aviation, the manufacture of chemical products, explosives, dye-stuffs, etc., have progressed in a manner which before the war would have seemed incredible. Necessity assumed control of the laboratories which of old were in the grip of a routine that was deaf to all reproaches.

If we could only revive our dead and rebuild our ruins, we should be inclined to ask ourselves whether the war was not of use to us. Man can usually do better than he thinks, but he does not always know what he can do. The European conflict will prove to have been one of those great cataclysms which have the power of revealing to men their actual worth.

CHAPTER IV

THE GERMANIC ILLUSIONS AS TO THE ADVANTAGES OF CONQUEST

I HAD occasion in another volume to point out that the activities of conquest and colonization assume three principal forms.

The first, practised by all the peoples of antiquity, consisted of invading a country with an army, pillaging its treasures and seizing the more vigorous of its inhabitants in order to force them to work as slaves.

In the end, however, it was found that this method was costly and unprofitable. In the days of the Empire the Romans confined themselves to trading with the conquered peoples, and in return for somewhat insignificant profits they protected them against the aggression of their neighbours.

This second method, still practised in our days, is often fruitful; but it involves numerous complications, since the victor must be prepared to save the protected country from the possible aggressions of jealous rivals, and then to administer it intelligently.

The ruinous administration of our colonies proves that intelligent administration is not easy.

The third method of conquest, applied in a rudimentary fashion by the Phœnicians of old, and considerably developed in our days by the Germans before the war, consists in leaving the cost of military protection and administration to the inhabitants of the country industrially and commercially invaded. In this way the invaders absorb the profits, while the original occupants pay all the expenses of government. These same invaders, moreover, soon become possessed, in each of the countries which they are successfully exploiting, of the political influence which is always bestowed by wealth.

It needed the revelations of the war to betray the degree of economic invasion realized by Germany and the enormous amount of profit which she derived from this method of exploitation.

Writers who see in history nothing but rational phenomena, and disregard the action of the mystic forces which control it, are still asking themselves how the Germans could have abandoned methods which were giving them the economic hegemony of the world to hurl themselves into a ruinous war. The absurdity of this venture—always regarding it from the rational standpoint—appears even greater when we reflect that Germany's principal trade was with France and England.

The explanation of such behaviour only becomes clear when we recall the prodigious influence exerted in Germany by the mystic propaganda of hegemony. We must also remember that this country was ruled by principles belonging respectively to very different phases of evolution. The German nation was really an industrial people governed by a military caste ignorant of the economic necessities of the present age.

Still imbued with the conceptions of a feudal baron of the twelfth century, this caste was convinced that the military conquest of foreign countries is still as lucrative an operation as it may have been centuries ago.[1]

The blunder was obvious to all economists who were not suffering from the illusions due to the desire of conquest or the mystic ideal of hegemony. They knew perfectly well that, even if the German armies could have seized all the capitals of the world, German trade with the subjected peoples, whose revolts they would have been forced continually to repress, would have been much less profitable than before the war.

[1] This is only natural. The mentality of the German officer, it may be noted, is that of a brigand. Individual officers seized every opportunity of looting, and the military authorities encouraged the removal of machinery and the ruin of enemy industries, unable to realize that in a country which is not wholly self-sufficing wealth cannot be achieved by production, but only by trade, so that in ruining the industries of their neighbours they were creating a blockade almost as effectual as that of the British Fleet.—*Trans.*

A few German writers, whose mystic fury had been somewhat cooled by the first years of the war, finally recognized the reality of these facts. They asked themselves uneasily whether the administration of the conquered provinces of Belgium and Russia, or a protectorate over them, would not be, quite apart from the inevitable revolts, an extremely onerous procedure, and one in every way less productive than the simple economic invasion which was so far advanced before the war.

These ideas gained a wider and wider acceptance in Germany. While she was still victorious a deputy to the Reichstag asked, in an article published by the *Berliner Tageblatt*, whether it was really in Germany's interest to annex Belgium, since from the economic point of view she had completely conquered the country before the war. "Antwerp was already a German port." He concluded by saying that the annexation of Belgium would be a burden rather than a gain.

All enlightened Germans are to-day fully convinced that the war would have been a most disastrous venture for Germany even if she had been victorious.

Before the war, of the £400,000,000 of merchandise exported by Germany, 58 per cent. was absorbed by the nations of the Entente, while 67 per cent. of her imports came from the same countries. To her allies and colonies she did not export as much as 13 per cent. of her products. None of them, therefore, could have replaced the nations against whom she undertook a war whose disastrous character was soon to appear to her.

* * *

Only when these ideas are sufficiently fixed in men's minds to become motives of action will the world be able to count on a lasting peace. It is of no use to call for the destruction of militarism, which only militarism can destroy, nor for a League of Nations, which could as yet have little influence, nor for alliances, which are only too often unreliable, as the example of Russia has demonstrated, nor for fresh military conflicts, which are

always ruinous when millions of men of equal valour confront one another.

What neither arms nor diplomacy nor theories have been able to create will perhaps be engendered by those imperious necessities which in all ages have prevailed over human will. A people cannot easily change the concepts which direct its conduct, but it is no longer very confident of their value when they have heaped too many disasters upon it. Germany was steadily led toward this critical phase, in which, having become more and more doubtful of the beliefs which used to guide its life, a nation finds itself compelled to change them.

CHAPTER V

THE VARIOUS CONCEPTIONS OF LAW: THE PROBLEM OF AN INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENT

THE numerous dissertations of statesmen and journalists which have been published since the beginning of the war have ended by representing law as a sort of mystic entity possessing an existence of its own apart from society.

This view has no connection with reality. Law is merely an abstraction devoid of fixity. Created by the social needs of each period, it varies in accordance with those needs. To-day's law is not yesterday's and will not be to-morrow's.

It is not an easy thing to give a correct definition of law. Recent books have attempted to do so in vain. Their failure is due to the fact that a single formula cannot contain fluctuating and dissimilar elements.

In a general fashion we may say that the best definition of law is still that of the old Digest of Justinian: "That which in each country is useful to all or to the greater number."

Evidently this definition can only be applied to a given society at a given period, not to the relations between different peoples having no interests in common.

And this is why Pascal, who was probably unacquainted with Justinian, affirmed that law has its periods; that it depends upon latitude, and that what is true this side of the Pyrenees becomes untrue beyond them.

To throw a little light on this difficult subject I will do as I have done elsewhere: establish three fundamental divisions in the examination of the law:

1. *Biological or natural law.* This governs the relations of animals between themselves and of man to the animals.

2. *Law in society.* Under the names of the civil code, the criminal code, etc. (common and criminal law), it defines the duties of men belonging to the same society.

3. *Law external to society, or international law.* This is supposed to control the relations of the nations among themselves, but it does not do so, the lack of sanctions having always prevented it from being respected. It was precisely because it was once more infringed that so many nations were recently at war.

* * *

The German philosophers and their Pan-German disciples claimed to replace international law by biological law; that is, the law governing the relations of man to the animal species.

Before any civilization had appeared this biological law was based solely on force. Nature knew no other.

It is by the application of the biological law that the wolf eats the lamb, that the trapper snares rabbits, that the cook with a calm conscience bleeds to death the different varieties of poultry subjected to his law.

It was by invoking the same biological law that the Germans endeavoured to justify their ravages.

"The Germans alone are human beings," according to some of their philosophers. The Kaiser Wilhelm accepted this doctrine when he asserted that the human race began only at the Vosges.

In consequence of their supposed superiority, the Germans used to claim rights over other men identical with those of the wolf over the lamb or the sportsman over game.

It is important to bear this Germanic conception in mind, in order to understand the last war with its development of savage ferocity.

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To-day we are confronted by a people who, with their supposed ethnical superiority, confirmed, according to them, by their divine mission, will never admit that they can be bound by treaties. Their professors, indeed, do

not hesitate to declare in their books that " when it is to the interest of a Great Power to violate written engagements it has the right to do so."

This conception is reflected in the speeches of German statesmen: " Necessity knows no law," " Treaties are scraps of paper." It is allowable to torpedo neutral vessels on the simple condition of " leaving no traces," that is, taking care to drown all their crews, etc.

It would be as useless to protest against a mentality of this type as to be indignant with that of the wolf or jackal. The only thing that matters is to understand it thoroughly, so that we can learn to protect ourselves against it. Hitherto the methodical use of reprisals has constituted the sole means of effective protection. The old law of retaliation, *lex talionis*, the law of the ages of barbarism, had perforce to be revived with the renaissance of barbarism.

In the early stages of the war the citizens of Mannheim, Cologne, Frankfort, Stuttgart and other cities delighted in the vision of Germany enriching herself by the pillage of the invaded countries, and they joyfully applauded the massacre of inoffensive civilians by their Zeppelins.

But when, as our air service was developed, these same citizens of Cologne, Stuttgart and so forth heard the whizzing of our bombs and saw their houses burning and their wives and children blown to pieces, they immediately grasped the utility of an international law which would, it is true, prevent powerful nations from massacring weak nations, but which would also have afforded a certainty that they would not in their turn be the victims of such massacres. Many petitions were signed in Germany in the hope of securing the cessation of air-raids. Thanks to our reprisals, the utility of a law of nations was experimentally proved to the Germans.

Other examples of a very tangible nature accumulated, proving to them that brute force is not the sole ruler of the world, and that violations of the ancient laws of humanity and honour may, if of too shocking a nature, evoke powers capable of cruelly chastising those who do not respect them.

Indeed, if Germany had not violated her engagement to respect the integrity of Belgium, England would not have taken up arms against her. Without submarine outrages like the sinking of the *Lusitania*, which aroused the whole world's indignation, pacific America would never have entered the war.

So that justice and honour, which seemed such contemptible illusions to the philosophers beyond the Rhine, proved on the contrary to be powerful enough to call to our side armies of sufficient strength to change the issue of the conflict.

We thus arrive at this result, a realization of which will necessarily contribute toward the creation of an international morality, the necessary basis of the future international law: that it would have been to the interest of the Germans, during the war, and will be, during the period of the restoration of commercial relations, to respect the moral laws created by civilization. What has Germany gained by all her acts of barbarity and bad faith? She has banded the whole world against her, and inspired all the nations with so great a distrust of her word that the conclusion of a treaty of peace with her was a very laborious proceeding.

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The constitution of a League of Nations, of which so many persons are dreaming to-day, and to which we shall devote a chapter, would imply, to begin with, the establishment of an international law upheld by sanctions.

But in the present state of the world the sanctions of international law can be enforced only with the assistance of a powerful army. With the object of disarming Germany we should consequently have to militarize a great part of the world. This would be precisely the contrary of the goal desired.

Because of the German mentality a League of Nations would necessarily be at the outset a defensive league, heavily armed.

But the necessities of which I have more than once had occasion to speak, and which will render fresh wars

difficult, will perhaps in the end deprive the League of the character of a permanent army.

Under the influence of these necessities a new international law may be established, respected simply because every nation, haunted by the fear of devastating reprisals, will have an interest in making it respected. Then only fraternity may be able in some degree to make its appearance. From the walls on which this long disgraced word has been vainly inscribed it will descend into men's hearts; as soon as the facts have shown that it is necessary, opinion will support it.

Opinion has nowadays become very important, and already we can foresee the time when the might of the law will reside far more in the protection that public assent will afford it than in that of artillery.

This hour has not yet struck, but already we can faintly descry the outlines of the future law of nations. The offspring of new necessities, not of those theoretical conceptions whose fragility was so completely revealed by the Hague tribunal, it cannot exist until it has been enforced by necessity and stabilized by opinion.

This new law will involve the creation of a sort of international government; that is, of a government to which the associated nations will resign a fraction of their sovereign power.

This conception is obviously contrary to the political principles universally accepted to-day as those of the absolute right of States. How could they tolerate above them an authority invested with powers of its own capable of restricting their liberty?

Such an independent and permanent power would constitute, according to Professor Liszt, "an infringement of the sovereignty of the States and a displacement of the fundamental bases of the law of nations."

To be sure, it may be said that the Governments are already bound by certain international engagements. They cannot, for example, coin more than a given quantity of silver money. Regulations condition their international postal and telegraphic communications, etc But such engagements were mere temporary treaties,

hardly affecting any but commercial interests and without sanctions.

There is, however, a little known but very definite example which proves that States can delegate part of their powers to a collective tribunal whose decrees they are then obliged to accept. I am referring to the tribunal created before the war by the delegates of some ten Governments to apply the Brussels Convention relating to sugars.

This tribunal, which operated for ten years, possessed a sovereign power which could even compel any one of the contracting Powers to refrain from the application of new laws voted by its Parliament. For instance, on the occasion of its session of June 16, 1903, the tribunal decided that an Austrian law promulgated on January 31st of the same year, relating to the contingent of sugar, was contrary to its prescriptions, and the Imperial Government was forced to annul it on August 1st.

This international delegation really constituted, as one of its members, M. A. Delatour, has written, "a true court of arbitration in its most powerful and efficacious form." This was the first example of international jurisdiction wielding sovereign powers.

Thanks to its decrees, against which there was no appeal, and to which all the Governments were obliged to submit, it succeeded in equalizing the conditions of competition, limiting fiscal surcharges, and preventing the cartels from continuing to disturb international competition by means of dumping.

If the powers of such a tribunal were extended, we should have the elements of a collective government, which would create an international law governing all economic, military and financial questions of general interest.

This future international government was, for that matter, spontaneously created, in a rough-hewn form, during the war, before our eyes, by the mere process of the fusion, on an ever-increasing scale, of the economic interests common to the Allies.

As the war was prolonged the military, agricultural

and financial resources of the associated nations tended more and more to be held in common. Their interests were so intertwined and united that the financial ruin of one would have led to that of the rest. Unfortunately, they did not decide upon continuing their association after the conclusion of peace.

The fusion of the economic interests of several great nations would perforce have given rise to a sort of international super-government which would have watched over certain collective interests of the allied States, having sovereign powers to solve such difficulties as might result from the combination of these interests.

This international government will possibly be constituted at some future date. It will probably have no similarity to a League of Nations like that whose utter ineffectiveness was demonstrated by the history of the Hague Tribunal. Nor will it resemble what has been called the United States of Europe. Its final form cannot as yet be foreseen, for it will be engendered, I repeat, by necessities which govern the world more and more effectually, and whose power is greatly superior to our will.

BOOK III

THE INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN BATTLE

CHAPTER I

PSYCHOLOGICAL ELEMENTS OF WARFARE

THE history of the nations is full of events of a kind that is often regarded as miraculous because the explanation of them is beyond the resources of our intellect. Many volumes were written on Joan of Arc; yet her most recent historian, M. Hanotaux, is obliged to admit that the illustrious heroine's adventure is full of mystery.

The nations of to-day have witnessed one of the most amazing events of all the ages. During the first months of the year 1918 the Germans, after a series of victories, had approached so close to Paris that the Government sent its administrative services into the provinces and was thinking of evacuating the capital.

A few months later the situation was completely altered. Thrown back from city to city and still retreating, the Germans were reduced to suing for peace.

Events of such importance are always due to a multiplicity of causes. Among these concomitant causes there are some which govern the rest and help to control them. In the first rank of these latter are the psychological factors.

* * *

I have already called attention to the fact that psychology has no place in the teaching of the so-called political sciences. It is regarded rather as one of those

still vague branches of knowledge with which everyone fancies himself to be familiar without studying it.[1]

The recent war will have given final proof of its capital importance.

The field of practical psychology has been too little explored so far to permit of such important discoveries as chemistry and physics have afforded. Yet certain discoveries have been made which have produced a considerable practical effect. That which was made by General Dupleix and enabled the English to conquer a great empire is a remarkable example. The English thought it important enough to justify their erecting a statue of its author.

Eminent English historians, such as Macaulay, and no less eminent philosophers, such as J. Stuart Mill, are unanimous in recognizing that it was in actual fact to Dupleix's discovery that England owed her important conquest.

This discovery seems simple enough to-day. It was remarkable for a period when the phenomenon of mental contagion was unknown and the value of an army was thought to reside merely in the number of its soldiers and the strategical devices of its generals.

Dupleix, apart from a few hundred Europeans, had only some indifferent native troops. Now, in India he had to fight armies whose strength was twenty times that of his own. How was he to replace the numerical factor which was lacking?

He succeeded in doing it by discovering that indifferent troops, when amalgamated with trained and tried European soldiers, acquired, by contagion, all the qualities of the latter, and were consequently able to fight much larger bodies of troops which did not possess those qualities.

[1] In justice, however, I must not overlook the fact that the principles of practical psychology, to which I have already devoted several volumes, have been taught in the École de Guerre for a good many years by eminent professors, and notably by Generals Bonnal and Maud'huy. One of the most brilliant of contemporary leaders, General Mangin, is good enough to call himself my pupil.

When Dupleix was obliged to leave India, the English immediately applied his discovery and were completely successful.

Before showing the part played by psychological factors during the recent war, as I shall often do in the subsequent chapters of this book, I shall briefly examine some of the psychological influences capable of increasing or diminishing the valour of the combatants.

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An army is a crowd—a homogeneous crowd, it is true, but retaining, despite its organization, some of the general characteristics of crowds: intense emotionality, suggestibility, obedience to leaders, etc.

In an army the leaders are the officers. Observation shows that the soldier is worth just what his commander is worth. An indifferent commander means indifferent troops. It is the commander's part to create that potent element of success: confidence. It is the best of stimulants. But while the commander can create confidence, he can maintain it only so long as success justifies it.

Extremely influential during periods of activity, the commander is much less powerful during inaction, and also, therefore, during a simple defensive. It was in periods of inaction, like that which followed the fruitless offensive of April 1917, that an absolute crisis of indiscipline and mutiny occurred in certain regiments. This resulted from the soldier's loss of confidence in success. Notorious trials have revealed how this crisis was developed by the propaganda of newspapers in the pay of Germany.

The prowess of the soldier obviously depends on his courage also, but this courage is liable, in the same body of soldiers, to great variations.

One of the most reliable elements of valour, or, if you prefer it, of indifference to danger, is the blunting of the sensibilities described as familiarity. It has been said with reason that at the beginning of the campaign no soldier would have held out under the infernal bombardments, the poison-gas and the liquid fire that failed to check our troops at a later date.

It is precisely because surprise destroys familiarity that it is so formidable. An undefined danger, however slight, seems much more menacing than a known danger, however great it is believed to be. Surprise is the unknown, and courage in face of the unknown is usually deficient.

Surprise, which has a depressing effect on the organism, reduces resistance. Our troops have often proved the truth of this statement. It was after surprises in March and May 1917 that they were forced to retire and to abandon important cities.

Our military commanders quickly understood the potency of surprise after this, and employed it in their turn. The result was the complete transformation of the old tactics, consisting in the preparation of operations by lengthy bombardments, which informed the enemy of his adversary's plans, giving him time to bring up reinforcements capable of paralysing the offensive. The failure which was the usual termination of this manœuvre gave rise to the doctrine of the impenetrability of the fronts. Experience proved the error of this doctrine.

Every new weapon—gas, flame-throwers, tanks, etc. —is, as I have already remarked, a source of surprise. However great its material effects, its moral effects are even more important. But owing to the mechanism of familiarity they soon lose their effect, and the adversary must then seek others.

To attack a position supposed to be impregnable, and for that reason ill-defended, constitutes another element of surprise.

Dupleix, who has already been mentioned, had realized that a fortress of which one side is reputed to be unassailable and therefore ill-defended should be attacked precisely on that side. It was by applying this principle that he captured one of the largest fortresses in India.

In May 1918 the Germans applied the same theory in their attack on the Chemin des Dames. This position was reckoned inviolable, and was so insufficiently guarded that they easily seized it and captured a large army with an immense amount of material. Such lessons

taught our General Staff that there were methods which made it possible to pierce impenetrable fronts. The lesson was utilized, since our successful offensive was never again arrested, despite many obstacles formerly regarded as irreducible.

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In so protracted a war it becomes a difficult matter to maintain the soldier's energies at a degree of tension which enables him to resist all the hazards of the conflict. An army is not an inert mass, but a living entity of great mobility, and therefore liable to many fluctuations. Here the utility of the various factors which we shall examine in another chapter becomes evident, and notably that of mental contagion and suggestibility.

These factors must be handled by the commanders. A body of soldiers, as I cannot too often repeat, is worth only what its leaders are worth. The latter must constantly consider the soldier's needs, and keep his mind absorbed by drills and exercises, interrupted by amusements, so that he is not unduly isolated and confronted by depressing thoughts. The Queen of Belgium gave proof of a sound knowledge of psychology when she established on the Belgian front four great theatres in which ten thousand soldiers daily could see plays, hear music, or enjoy a cinema show.

The value of an army depends not only on the degree of energy maintained by its leaders, but also on the duration of this energy. Among our troops it was commonly maintained. Although of all our citizens it was he who suffered most, the soldier was the one who complained the least. The heroic maxim "not to set up to be somebody" faithfully represents this frame of mind.

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Fortune often rewards the daring, but the line of demarcation between daring and temerity being difficult to trace, daring men are rare.

Examples of battles won by daring or lost by lack of it abound in history. I will confine myself to citing two: one ancient, one modern.

The first figures in a recent volume of Lord Fisher's. There he tells how Nelson's daring won the victory of Aboukir. Nelson was walking to and fro upon his quarter-deck at sunset when the French fleet was signalled as being at anchor in Aboukir Bay. Immediately he gave the order to the whole of his fleet to clap on sail and attack the enemy ships. His officers reminded him that to attack by night, without charts and by way of a passage full of reefs, might be extremely dangerous. Nelson confirmed his orders, declaring that those ships that might be cast away would serve to guide the rest.

The French admiral, too, was pacing his quarter-deck when he was warned of the approach of the enemy. He replied that the British fleet, having no charts, could not sail far in the night, and did not think it worth while to recall such of his men as were ashore. The final result was the complete destruction of the French fleet.

If at the outset of the last war our fleet had been commanded by an admiral bold enough to traverse the Dardanelles in pursuit of the two German war-ships that reached Constantinople, the great conflict, as Mr. Lloyd George admitted in Parliament, would have been shortened by three years. Nelson would not have hesitated, but men so daring are uncommon at all times.

* * *

Boldness is profitable only when supported by reliable judgement. Now, judgement implies the art of observation. This art was often lacking during the war, especially in our diplomatists. They did not see what was going on all round them and were surprised by events. On the eve of the conflict they were so ignorant of the intentions of Turkey that we consented to a loan of £20,000,000, which she employed simply in arming herself against the Allies. And when Bulgaria was on the point of entering the war by the side of Germany, our diplomatists

were still convinced that she would fight on the side of the Entente.

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Moral factors have, of course, no influence if, as is often the case at the beginning of a campaign, they are opposed by material elements which are too strong for them.

These moral factors act principally on troops weakened by fatigue or depressed by failure. At such times there comes a moment when their power of resistance is non-existent.

The defeat of the Germans is an example of this. It justifies yet again Napoleon's saying: "From triumph to downfall is only a step; I have observed in the greatest emergencies that a mere nothing has nevertheless determined some of the most important events."

The mere nothing is the trifling weight which, thrown into a balance with equally loaded scales, will make it dip on the side of this trivial weight. Such a phenomenon occurs at the decisive moment when equal forces have produced an equality of lassitude and success depends on the final effort.

It was doubtless because the mental depression of his troops was beginning to react upon him that Ludendorff, in his last effort to penetrate our front, was lacking in boldness. His object was to march on Paris from Château-Thierry, but he hesitated and allowed the moment to pass when the operation would have been successful, because of his fear, which was a little chimerical, that American divisions might interpose themselves between Château-Thierry and Paris.

Among the psychological factors which play a capital part in warfare, unity of command and precision of orders must be mentioned. Unity of action is so important that we shall devote a special chapter to the subject. At present we will merely say a few words as to precision of orders.

This precision was difficult to ensure in the French Army. All the determination of an energetic Minister

was needful to check the permanent intervention of politicians, resulting in unending successions of counter-orders and fluctuations of command which greatly hampered operations.

As soon as the troops felt that they had a commander, their discouragement gave way to energy and the spirit of the offensive was reawakened on all the Allied fronts.

* * *

The moral strength of an army is very largely dependent upon its general conception of things; that is, upon its optimism or pessimism.

Since the beginning of history men have practised optimism and pessimism. The characteristics of these two tendencies might be described as follows:

To appreciate an event at its correct value is almost impossible, since moral balances have never the accuracy of material balances. According to a man's temperament, the same fact may be regarded with optimism, pessimism or indifference. Some natures always despair; others never do so.

The celebrated Candide is assuredly the type of the perfect optimist, endowed with a mental blindness so complete that he is insensible of the blows of fate. But Candide's father was a philosopher, while he has left but few offspring in his own image.

The only form of optimism possible to-day is that which avoids exaggerating the misfortunes that befall us, while perceiving their advantageous aspects, however small these may be, and seeking to create for itself a better future.

The intelligent optimist is an optimist by determination as much as by temperament. Thanks to a strong will he struggles against events instead of allowing himself to be their plaything, and does not allow himself to be unduly affected by his fate. For example, if he lived in Paris during the bombardment he would note that disease-germs, which cause the death of a thousand Parisians weekly, constituted a much greater danger

than shells. Therefore one should not be more disturbed by the latter than by the former.

Thus, armed with a buckler of serenity, the optimist exerts a beneficent influence on those about him, for optimism, like pessimism for that matter, is essentially contagious.

The optimist always believes in the success of his undertakings. Capable of running risks and fearless of danger, he often sees his efforts crowned with success. Chance is not, as the ancients used to say of Fortune, a blind goddess. She willingly grants the optimist favours which she denies the pessimist.

Yet, to be really valuable, optimism should be associated with a reliable judgement. Otherwise it causes lack of foresight, due to the idea that things will of themselves fall out as we desire. Those were optimists, although of a very short-sighted type, who prevented others from preparing for war by repeating that war was impossible.

Optimism, therefore, is not always without danger, but pessimism is far more perilous.

The lot of the pessimist is generally wretched enough. He sees only the dismal side of things, and to him the future often appears catastrophic. The misfortunes which he foresees surround him with so close a web that no least ray of joy can penetrate it. Certainly he is not lacking in foresight, but foresight dispersed over the infinite variety of possibilities is useless to him. Not venturing to undertake anything, he lives in a state of indecision. In short, his life is a burden to himself and to others. In the army pessimists have always been extremely dangerous.

In military as in industrial conflict, optimism and pessimism represent two frequently antagonistic forces. The first creates endurance, energy and confidence—that is, the elements of success. But behind the pessimists the knell of defeat is heard ere long.

CHAPTER II

THE RESULTS OF UNITY OF ACTION

ONE of the chief psychological elements of success in warfare, whether military or industrial, is unity of action.

It constituted one of Germany's elements of strength in all her undertakings, political, military or economic.

Thanks to constant effort, the Allies eventually equalled the Germans in the matter of armaments; but in the matter of initiative and unity of action they commonly proved to be greatly inferior to their adversaries.

An English Minister, in one of his speeches, laid bare the serious consequences of this inferiority, but failed to perceive its fundamental causes. It was long before the Allies fully realized the psychological origin of the failures of which they were the victims in the absence of united action.

The Allies (said Lloyd George) more than once sought to remedy this dispersion of efforts and to establish a strategical unity. On various occasions conferences were held with a view to concerting common action. They only succeeded in the artificial conjunction of the plans established by the command of each of the belligerents in respect of the operations which they were undertaking on their own fronts.

Having shown the serious defects resulting from this persistent lack of co-ordination, notably when the Allies neglected to attack Austria in the East and were too late in giving assistance to the Serbs and Rumanians, the speaker added:

In 1916 we held in Paris the same conference with the same appearance of preparing a great strategic plan. The result was no better.

The Minister's speech provoked a series of impassioned

debates in the English Press and in the House of Commons, and was the cause of a new Allied Conference in Paris—I believe the sixth. This was as ineffectual as those that went before it.

The British Prime Minister had certainly pointed out some of the consequences of a defective understanding. But he seems to have been ignorant of the fact that any collectivity, and above all a military collectivity, never possesses the psychological qualities indispensable to the command.

The celebrated statesman came only very slowly—only after the disasters of the spring of 1918, in fact—to understand this impotence of collectivities. We see this by the long series of changes which occurred before the sole command was established. The following passages from speeches delivered by the British Premier give us a good idea of the pace of these transformations:

> For the heavy and inconvenient mechanism of conferences we must substitute a permanent Council, whose duty it will be to review the whole field of military operations with the object of determining where and how the resources of the Allies can be employed with the best results.

The speaker then shows the difficulty of obtaining such results:

> National and professional traditions, questions of prestige and susceptibilities, all conspired to render our best decisions useless. No one in particular was to blame. The responsibility was that of the natural difficulty of ensuring that so many nations, so many independent organizations, should merge together all their individual peculiarities in order to act together as though they were only one people. Now that we have established this Council, it is for us to see that the unity which it represents is a fact and not an appearance.

Mr. Lloyd George alluded to one of the difficulties of realizing the goal pursued when he remarked that but for the disaster of Caporetto no unity of command would have been possible in Italy. The Italian Generalissimo was so sure of his plans that he had repulsed all suggestions

of foreign aid. The watchword *Nostra guerra* was then general in Italy.

After many discussions the Allies set up a Supreme War Council, composed of Ministers of the Great Powers.

Its mission was to supervise the general conduct of the war, to prepare certain plans and to submit them to the decision of the Governments. The general plans of warfare drawn up by the military authorities will have to be submitted to the Superior Council of War, which will propose such modifications as it considers necessary.

* * *

These various devices were subject to the same psychological blunders. This point must again be insisted upon.

The efficacy of all the Supreme Councils depended upon the favourable solution of the following problem: Is a council of war selected from highly qualified persons able usefully to control a body of military operations?

Even if all the politicians in the world were to reply to this question in the affirmative, the psychologists would be forced to meet it with an energetic denial.

And here I must refer to certain fundamental principles of the psychology of crowds, as expounded in one of my books. There I showed that from the point of view of intelligence, and above all decisiveness, a collectivity is always greatly inferior to each of the individuals that compose it.

Continually verified, even in industrial undertakings, this law also manifests its validity in military matters. This can easily be explained without insisting on purely psychological data.

Let us remember, to begin with, that all the councils of war of which history has kept a record have proved to be very well adapted to criticism and very ill adapted to action.

It could not be otherwise. Imagine a body of Allied generals discussing any given operation proposed by their Governments or by one of themselves. Whatever the nature of this operation, it would of course involve risks and uncertainties. The criticism of those present

would readily expose these drawbacks. From that moment each of them would see the undertaking from a different point of view. The consequences would be hesitation, temporization and finally inaction.

Suppose, moreover, that the members of this council of war represent countries whose interests are incompatible. Unconsciously but certainly each of them will perceive most plainly the interest of his own country. Thus, for example, the British supplied only a smallish contingent for the expedition to Salonika, as they thought it would be of greater utility to increase the strength of their troops in Egypt and Mesopotamia. An Italian general would naturally have found it more essential to defend the Italian front. A French general would have had the French front in view, etc.

The laws of collective psychology being all but unknown to our diplomatists, we must not be surprised that the British Premier, after formulating very well-deserved criticisms, should have arrived at conclusions which were plainly insufficient. Rejecting the idea of a single generalissimo, he necessarily fell back on the conception of a council of war, presenting all the invariable defects of all collectivities.

While the British Premier's energetic campaign did not at once create the unity of action dreamed of, it at least forced the nations to draw more closely together, making them realize the necessity of sacrificing their individual interests to the general interest.

However, it took the Germans' march on Paris, after their victories of the early part of 1918, finally to secure the realization of the single command.

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The psychological impossibility of the idea that any committee whatever, even though composed of men of the same nationality, could usefully direct military operations seems at first sight to be contradicted by certain events of the past. To the laws of the psychology of crowds the Socialists are fond of opposing the

history of the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety. But here they are the victims of an illusion.

In a volume published some years ago under the title *The Psychology of Revolution*, I demonstrated the fact that the legendary "Giants of the Convention" were in reality a very feeble and timorous assembly, changing their ideas daily in accordance with the popular impulse which dominated them, and that they never succeeded in emerging from a condition of profound anarchy.

If the Convention deluded the historians, leaving the recollection of a gloomy energy, this was because, being absorbed in permanent intestine quarrels, it abandoned military problems to the Committee of Public Safety. Now, this Committee was a collectivity only in appearance, since it confided the direction of the armies to a single member, Carnot, who acted as he pleased, his colleagues confining themselves to countersigning his orders. Unity of action was thus established, and it was actually a single command, a single leader, that opposed the European Coalition.

This leader, moreover, was confronted by armies in which unity of command was unknown, and it was this that saved France.

If during the summer of 1793 the Allies had marched on Paris, it is a hundred to one we should have been lost. They alone saved us by giving us time to create soldiers, officers, generals.

So wrote a contemporary, General Thiébault. It was then that the superiority of the single command appeared, as it appeared in our days. The Allied sovereigns had diverse interests, and mutually distrusted one another, which prevented them, at the outset, from agreeing upon a common course of action. After Valmy, for example, the King of Prussia withdrew without fighting, in order to be present at the dismemberment of Poland and to increase his share.

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Unity of action will be as needful during the coming economic struggles as it was during the war. We shall

need a close co-ordination of our actions, and not merely of speech. The statesman who should succeed in establishing unity of action in the social, political and industrial life of France would deserve a great many statues.

For it is a fact that the lack of co-ordination in our efforts has always been, whether in peace or war, the most disastrous of our national defects. It has heavily oppressed our manufacturers, as I have shown. They were incapable of uniting their efforts to struggle against the powerful German combinations. And this same lack of co-ordination has long oppressed, and is still oppressing, our administrative organization. The typical example of those Parisian streets that are taken up and repaved several times in the same month, because the employés of the various municipal services—gas, telephones, water, etc.—could not agree to open a single trench on the same day, was unhappily often repeated during the war. Agents of the various Ministries competed in America for the purchase of the same horses, so that they paid four times the proper price.

In an article published in *Le Matin* the High Commissioner of the French Government in the United States, M. Tardieu, has demonstrated some of the consequences of this lack of unity of action between our various governmental departments. When, perceiving the menace of approaching famine as the result of an insufficiency of the means of transport, the nations were buying vessels of the States, we had not bespoken a single one. "Why?" writes M. Tardieu. "I do not know. Ask the Minister of that period." In reality, the question should be asked of the departmental offices, which were governed by jealousy, the dread of responsibility and incompetence.

Our yards could not, moreover, have built a single ship, lacking the necessary steel plates. To obtain permission to buy such in America our Commissioner, despite his plenary powers, had to negotiate for four months with our dreadful bureaucrats.

Many generations of Ministers have sought to break down the watertight compartments maintained between the different Ministries, and even between the different

offices of the same Ministry. No one has ever succeeded in doing so. The Academies, which distribute so many useless prizes for vague memoirs, might well found one to reward the writer capable of explaining the causes of so lasting a phenomenon. And they should found a second, of ten times the importance, for the discovery of a remedy for a situation before which so many Ministers have in all periods admitted themselves to be utterly powerless.

CHAPTER III

ROUTINE AND ERRONEOUS IDEAS IN TIME OF WAR

In examining the causes of the decadence of our industries before the war, we saw that they resulted from certain defects of character identical in all the branches of these industries.

The inferiority thus noted by various observers is so general that it is difficult to regard it as peculiar to a single social category. It is therefore interesting to inquire whether we do not find it in other professions also—for example, in the army.

If the same defects are to be noted everywhere we ought certainly to conclude that they form part of those general characteristics common to all the individuals of the same race, and in this case the necessity of examining the means of remedying them is plainly evident.

And first of all let us note two fundamental characteristics of modern wars: the directing principles are extremely simple, and the realization of these principles is terribly complicated. Such is the summary of modern strategy, whether by land or sea.

The simplicity of the leading conceptions is verified by the mere statement of the guiding principles of the British naval strategy and the German strategy on land in the recent war.

The concept governing the British policy of naval construction was, according to Lord Fisher, to possess a speed superior to the enemy's and guns of longer range.

The simplicity of the formula is obvious, but how difficult it was to realize! Nevertheless, it was achieved, and this is why, in certain battles of the late war, German battle-cruisers were sunk before they could register a

single hit on the English vessels, as Lord Fisher himself has recorded.

The principle of military strategy which guided the German Staff at the beginning of the hostilities presented the same characteristics: simplicity of statement, difficulty of achievement. It consisted of the method formerly applied by Hannibal at the battle of Cannes: of holding the adversary on the front and enveloping him by attacking him on the two wings.

General von Falkenhausen was faithfully practising this method when he deployed forty-four army corps between Switzerland and the North Sea, advancing by the two wings, above all by the right wing in Belgium, and then closing in across the north of France, which was not protected by any first-class fortress.

The realization of this manœuvre necessitated the employment in the first line of all the German reserves and the dangerous necessity of crossing Belgium.

That such a method miscarried was chiefly due to the fact that the Germans, underestimating the French powers of resistance, stripped a portion of their front that they might send troops to Russia. This at least is the explanation given by the ex-Commander-in-Chief, Falkenhayn, in a recent publication.

The Germans' first idea was, according to him, to destroy the French resistance so that they might then turn against Russia. It miscarried, as already stated, because the invaders, too sure of victory, removed from the Western front, at the end of August 1914, important forces of which they felt the want on the Marne. They were governed by the mistaken idea of seeking the decision in Russia, confining themselves, in France, to immobilizing us in the trenches, while waiting for a victory on the Russian front; an impossible victory, in view of the immense territory of Russia and the innumerable reserve of troops which that territory contained.

* * *

Among the psychological defects observed in our

military commanders the most mischievous was assuredly the spirit of routine. This consists of a certain lethargy of the intellect and the will which results in hostility toward new ideas, toward innovations, and in a tendency always to do things in the same way.

Although they seem at times to yield similar results, the spirit of routine and perseverance must not be confounded. Routine, being due chiefly to an inertia of the will, tends to perform an action with a minimum of effort. Perseverance, on the other hand, requires a great output of will-power and effort. The German is persevering, but not given to routine. The Russian is given to routine, but not persevering.

The victim of routine is inspired by ideas which undergo no change once he has adopted them, usually, for that matter, without discussion. For him ideas do not arise from the reasoned knowledge of things, but only from a belief accepted by suggestion or contagion. Hostile to all initiative, routine quickly gives rise to a dread of risk and responsibility.

Once it has affected the citizens of a country, the spirit of routine soon spreads from the ruled to the rulers. We then see the latter hesitating before the smallest innovations, and, in order to avoid responsibility, appointing a host of commissions and sub-commissions, which, more often than otherwise, form only the most uncertain decisions.

Several newspapers have recalled how, with the object of examining the utility of the light field-gun that did Germany such service, our Government appointed in succession nineteen commissions and sub-commissions, which, for that matter, never arrived at any decision.

It is generally in countries addicted to routine that the more violent political parties acquire the greatest influence. Innocent of routine as well as of principles, these parties are the only ones that find it easy to act.

Nations addicted to routine, being incapable of evolution, are subject to revolutions. There always comes a moment when, as society has failed to adapt itself progressively to changes of environment, necessity forces it to do so

suddenly and violently. It is the sum of such violence that constitutes a revolution.

* * *

Reducing routine to this essential element, the influence of a fixed idea adopted by mentalities hostile to change and somewhat deficient in imagination and will, we shall now consider some of its consequences during the war, especially in the early part of the war.

Affected by a suggestion whose origin is still unknown, but which was possibly derived from Moltke's reflection that nothing would be gained by entering France through Belgium, the heads of our War College declared that Germany would never invade us by the north. And, like Pompey of old affirming before the Senate that Cæsar would not cross the Rubicon, having said it once, they continued to repeat it.

They repeated it to such an extent that under their influence all the fortresses which protected the north of France, including Lille, were successively dismantled. On the outbreak of the war they had neither guns nor ammunition nor garrisons to defend them.

The same fixed idea resulted in the concentration of all our armies in the east, while the Germans were arriving by the north.

This prodigious illusion, so justly described by the deputy Engerand, in a remarkable inquiry published by the *Correspondant*, as a tragic error, was the cause of a surprise that cost us the invasion and devastation of the richest departments of France.

The guiding idea of our General Staff was so immovable that when the Germans were actually massing their great armies on the north of France, the Generalissimo, in his correspondence, was laughing at General Lanrezac, " who warned him of the imminence of the danger, and whose grief, when confronted with such blindness, was poignant."

The result of this blindness, due to the tenacity of a fixed idea in minds that were in the grip of the spirit of routine, was, in the words of the above-mentioned writer, that " nothing happened as our Staff had foreseen, and

nothing happened of that which it had foreseen. It was a case of surprise, disorder and muddle all along the line."

Nothing could check the invasion, for, as M. Engerand judiciously remarks, we had left "the whole of the northern region outside the zone of the armies, our concentration being established from Belfort to Mézières–Givet. The German offensive by way of the north through Belgium was obvious to everyone but the French Staff."

The Staff, unhappily, was too completely hypnotized by its hackneyed illusion to grasp realities. Only the rout of the armies was able to enlighten it.

The war has furnished many examples revealing the danger of the spirit of routine created by fixed ideas. General Gascoin, in his book on the *Evolution de l'Artillerie*, called attention to the fact that in 1914 "long-range fire" was à heresy condemned by the regulations. The result was that for several years—to be exact, until the summer of 1916—we were ignorant of the range of our 75's, a range of more than 7,500 yards.

"Not least among the phenomena of this war, from the psychological point of view," says this author, "was this error as to the properties of their principal gun, in which thousands of artillery officers and generals of all categories continued for several years of trench warfare, in which it was for a long time the only gun to be reckoned with in the daily battles."

For several years, too, nothing was known of the 75's capacity for destroying trenches by firing explosive shells at a high trajectory. We persisted in horizontal fire, which naturally could not affect the trenches.

It is necessary to note (writes the same officer), as pertaining to the history of artillery and the history of psychology during this war, that for two years our attacks suffered and our enemies profited by this disregard of the capacities of the 75 in respect of plunging fire for the destruction of trenches—this partial ignorance on our part, on the part of thousands of officers, of the properties of a gun with which they had been practising for more than fifteen years!

Under the influence of this mistaken idea of the inviolability of the trenches, attempts to break through

were definitely abandoned, and advances were limited to the supposed range of the 75, or some two to three kilometres (one and a quarter to one and three-quarter miles). Owing to our ignorance of its real range we commonly confined ourselves to bombarding the enemy trenches more or less at random. Hence a frightful waste of munitions. General Gascoin reckons that the cost of every German soldier killed was about 5,000 kilos (about five tons) of munitions.

From the psychological point of view it is curious to note that we were paralysed, held up, by fictitious barriers of a totally illusory nature, barriers which we imposed on ourselves by prohibiting fire at a longer range than 5,000 metres with the 75, our only really plentiful, well-supplied and efficacious weapon.

Experience would no doubt have enlightened us, but General Gascoin remarks, "in this war the Great General Staff quickly learned to dread new ideas." The result was "a general inferiority, except in the matter of stoicism, of the soldiers and their officers."

This is why the trench war was so severe and so costly, and why, after several years of attrition, it would, perhaps, without the American reinforcements, have ended in the victory of Ludendorff, if he had not thought fit, in the spring of 1918, to tempt a definite decision in a war of movement.

The doctrines of our great commanders weighed heavily upon us during the war. Only when they were abandoned after somewhat unexpected successes was it clear that the hour of victory was at hand. Instead of small local actions, the Generalissimo attacked successively at several points; that is, he threatened the enemy everywhere, which prevented the latter from bringing up reinforcements to the positions attacked, as he had done previously. For the first time since the beginning of the war we had the initiative of operations.

The following remark from an interview with Marshal Foch seems to prove that the plan of generalized attack was decided upon only at the last moment:

" Little by little," said the Marshal, " as we saw success coming, the front of attack was extended."

* * *

The foregoing examples should suffice to prove what catastrophes may be caused by the persistence of certain fixed ideas. Unhappily, these were not the only fixed ideas observed in the course of the war.

It would seem, indeed, that the repeated surprises of which we were the victims during the first months of 1918 were due to the influence of other fixed ideas.

After three fruitless attempts at breaking through (September 1915, July 1916, April 1917), our Staff had finally acquired a new idea, to the effect that modern methods of warfare rendered the fronts inviolable. Of course, it was admitted that they could be broken through to a certain small depth, but at the cost of enormous losses, out of all proportion to the results obtained.

In men of the temperament subject to the blight of routine an unexpected idea does not readily take hold of the mind, but once it is anchored there anything that may oppose it is immediately rejected without examination.

From the fact that the inviolability of the fronts was accepted by the Staff, it naturally followed that there was a general relaxation of a supervision which was regarded as needless.

It was doubtless this relaxation that inspired the Germans with the plan of their surprises, notably that of the Chemin des Dames, where we did not even regard an attack as possible.

By means of artificial movements they first of all succeeded in persuading our Staff that the offensive would be delivered at a point very remote from the goal which they actually had in view.

To move troops and material to the real battle-front without attracting attention was not easy. A war correspondent has published the details of the methods employed, which, for that matter, were identical with those published in the German newspapers, which prove

what meticulous precautions are demanded by modern warfare to render success possible.

The men travelled by night, in small groups; they were forbidden to smoke or to light fires to cook their food. In the daytime the men hid in the woods, and no troops, no guns, no vehicles were allowed on the roads.

To make the surprise more complete, the attack was preceded only by a very short bombardment with gas shells. Having brought no heavy artillery, the attacking armies were accompanied only by machine-guns and field-pieces light enough to be carried by the men, whose utility our commissions were then still discussing.

The success obtained by the Germans proved once again the value of certain qualities, such as order, vigilance and detail, which used to be regarded as modest virtues, but which, in the present phase of society, as I have already demonstrated, are indispensable to the prosperity of a nation.

The routine engendered by inertia may also be due to poverty of ideas. No initiative, indeed, is possible without guiding ideas. In a volume dealing with the naval lessons of the war, Admiral Davelny observes that the fact that our navy played so small a part in the war was due precisely to the lack of initiative displayed by the high command. "It lacked the intellectual impulse to oppose new means to novel methods." In five years of warfare our navy never contrived to take the initiative. It suffered likewise from the terrible lack of organization which most of our public services revealed.

* * *

We have demonstrated, with the help of detailed examples, the consequences of routine. The Germans were also its victims on more than one occasion. Their actual superiority resided in the fact that, thanks to a thorough experimental education, they were never slow to reject erroneous theories, whatever the prestige of their defenders.

In reality, while the Germans committed a great many

mistakes, they did so, as a rule, not under the control of fixed ideas, but under the influence of fixed feelings, which is not quite the same thing.

Among the more active of these feelings were pride, the craving for domination and disdain of the adversary. To these were due many of the psychological defects referred to in another section of this volume.

But I repeat that, while the Germans made mistakes as great as our own, they were capable of learning from experience and never opposed the creative initiatives of progress.

For this reason, in the course of the campaign, they always developed far more quickly than the Allies. Our military critics have been forced to recognize the constant initiative of the Germans. "The Allies," writes General Malleterre, "have always been outstripped in application by the German Great General Staff, which was thus enabled to retain or recover its military superiority at times when that of the Allies seemed about to become evident or even obtrude itself."

Among the instances of German initiative there are some which played a part of considerable importance. It will suffice to mention the following:

The use of the great automobile howitzers to which the rapid fall of Liége, Maubeuge, Antwerp, etc., was due; the employment of poison gases; the construction of large submarines; the invention of guns with a range of 60 miles, etc.

The chief cause of our inferiority in so many particulars is identical with the causes which we noted when inquiring into our industrial methods: the paralysis of initiative by the spirit of routine, which in itself is due to the persistence of ideas which were useful in their day, but which modern developments have rendered erroneous.

* * *

The psychological defects revealed by observation of the various classes of our society cannot be remedied by laws or regulations. The only possible remedy is an entirely new system of education, addressing itself

far more to the character than to the intellect. The enormous development of the United States is due to methods of education which differ completely from ours.

Having seen our American allies at work and considered their fertile activity, we realize how just are the reflections of one of our most eminent scientists, M. Le Chatelier, who remarks, in respect of education in the United States, that a people shaped by such educational methods will necessarily possess a civilization superior to ours.

The disastrous part played by our University constitutes yet another example of the blighting influence of the routine resulting from certain fixed ideas.

The ideas which direct our educational system never having undergone any development, the result of that system is an inferiority which is everywhere admitted.[1] It was with reason that an eminent Minister, M. Ribot, at the close of an important Parliamentary inquiry into University teaching, stated that "our University is in part responsible for the evils of French society." And we might also add that it was in large measure responsible for our early reverses in the war.[1]

[1] The reader will remember that the term "University" here refers to the whole system of State education in France.—*Trans.*

CHAPTER IV

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAUSES OF THE GERMAN COLLAPSE

1. *General Surprise produced by the German Collapse.*

ALL the causes of the German defeat have not yet been clearly determined. Many years will in all probability elapse before they are finally elucidated.

The German collapse was for many Germans, as well as for the Allies and other nations, one of the most incomprehensible events of history.

The explanations furnished by the *White Book* published by the German Government throw little light on the subject. They merely show the importance of the part played by psychological factors in the issue of the Great War.

Because of this influence of the psychological elements we may usefully devote some pages to a subject which might seem to be the province of the military historian.

* * *

We shall realize how difficult it was to foresee the German defeat if we re-read the speeches delivered by the most eminent statesmen only a few days before the Armistice. They show that it is sometimes quite impossible to foresee events that are really close at hand.

Among these speeches, one of those which most clearly proves my point was delivered on October 23, 1918, that is to say, eighteen days before the Armistice, by one of the best-informed men in the world, the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, then British Secretary for Foreign Affairs. He said:

The end of the war is not yet in sight. We have no reason to suppose that our enemies, or at all events the more formidable among them,

are on the point of disaggregation before the moral and material strength of the associated Powers.

The speaker's surprise was naturally very great when, some days later, the enemy spontaneously confessed himself defeated. His astonishment found utterance in the following words:

I do not think there can have been in the history of the world a change in the fortunes of war of so overwhelming, so important a nature as that which has occurred between March and October.

In France, likewise, we had but little hope. On the very eve of the German collapse we had almost lost all hope of success. "On the night of May 29, 1918," writes a distinguished historian, M. Madelin, "the future victory of the Entente would have seemed a crazy hypothesis even to our best friends." Paris was seriously menaced. Never had Germany appeared so near a final triumph.

These quotations do more than show how unforeseen was the German defeat. They also show how ill-informed we were concerning the condition of the enemy armies. Our lack of data in this respect is really remarkable. For we know now that as early as August 14th Ludendorff confessed to the Kaiser that the war was lost

* * *

The events of the early part of the year 1918 show how quickly victory changed camps.

The transformation effected in a few months was truly prodigious, for the series of disastrous defeats which was suffered by the Allies ended in a dazzling triumph. A few lines will suffice to recall these immortal pages of our history

Since March 21, 1918, the Germans had twice surprised us and had inflicted severe reverses. On May 27th we were surprised again at the Chemin des Dames, that is, on a section of the front where their presence was not even suspected. They took from us nearly 100,000

prisoners and a vast amount of reserve material accumulated in a sector which our leaders judged inviolable.

After these successes the German thrust assumed formidable proportions. On the evening of May 27th they crossed the Aisne; on the 29th they took Soissons; on May 31st they were on the Marne; on June 1st they entered Château-Thierry.

Paris then seemed in such danger that the Government, which had already sent its administrative departments into the provinces, was preparing to empty the city of its inhabitants. The situation appeared to be desperate.

It was not, however; for five months later the German Army, still more than 1,500,000 strong, signed a convention which no general would have consented to sign unless his powers of offence and defence were entirely destroyed.

The conditions imposed upon the vanquished enemy were, indeed, terrible:—the surrender of almost all his war material, and of his great fleet of battleships and submarines, the pride of Germany; the evacuation of Alsace, which he had sworn never to relinquish; the placing of Allied garrisons on the Rhine and the abandonment of all the colonies conquered so slowly and at such cost. Germany, still believing herself at the zenith of her greatness, fell suddenly into an abyss of humiliation.

* * *

Events of so prodigious a nature will constitute an unforgettable lesson for those nations and kings who, confident in their might, should meditate new conquests. Germany felt sure of a complete and rapid success. Her military organization and her armaments were immensely superior to ours. She had a hundred chances to one of being victorious; yet she was overcome.

We must therefore recognize that in modern wars, in which whole nations are in conflict, the unforeseen may falsify the most scientific calculations. On several occasions we were on the brink of the abyss, into which all the neutrals expected to see us fall. Yet we avoided

it, and Germany, despite her many victories, was finally crushed.

* * *

The general laws which govern the fate of battles show that their issue commonly depends upon the numbers and the valour of the troops, the capacity of the commanders and the abundance of material.

But all forecasts based upon these data are brought to confusion by the intervention of certain fortuitous circumstances, the complex of which constitutes what our ignorance describes as chance.

These circumstances may well be called fortuitous, since their occurrence or non-occurrence depends upon mere trifles.

The history of the Great War is full of such circumstances.

Among the incidents which prove how far the winning of a war may depend upon unforeseen circumstances we will cite one recorded by Admiral Sir Percy Scott,[1] which shows how readily the whole British Fleet might have been destroyed by the Germans.

The Admiral relates that in November 1914, on his visiting Scapa Flow, where the whole British Fleet was assembled, Admiral Jellicoe declared that as the fleet was in no way protected it might be entirely destroyed in a night by a few German submarines.

It is absolutely incomprehensible, says Sir Percy Scott, that it was not so destroyed. The only possible explanation is that the Germans "could not believe that we should be so insane as to place our vessels in a position where they could easily have been attacked by submarines." Two spies had indeed called attention to this absence of defence, but such a declaration appeared so improbable that the spies were suspected of treachery and immediately shot. Two others sent in their place declared, in order to escape their comrades' fate, "that the British Fleet was as well protected as the German Fleet in Kiel Canal." The Germans then gave up the idea of attempting

[1] In *Fifty Years in the Navy*.

to destroy the fleet; yet they could easily have done so, and its destruction would quickly have ended the war. The revelation of this situation, adds the writer, "will doubtless be the bitterest pill the Germans have ever had to swallow."

Among the fortuitous circumstances which have played their part in the war we might also cite the fact that it would undoubtedly have been greatly prolonged if General Mangin had followed the advice which was given him, to the effect that he should not continue his offensive. To this I shall refer later on.

These various possibilities, and those resulting from the alliances for which we were indebted to the psychological blunders of the Germans, show us once again the worthlessness of the theory of historic fatalism. It is our lack of certainty, our ignorance, that causes the pretended fatalities of which we are the victims.

2. *The Causes to which the Germans attribute their Defeat.*

The army and the people, during the war, constituted, in every nation, two elements, which constantly reacted one upon the other.

It is evident that the Russian people was yielding before its armies were destroyed, but in Germany we do not yet know for certain which yielded first, the army or the people.

The leaders of the Imperial troops claim that the complaints of the people demoralized the army, but other writers assert that the demoralization of the soldiery led to the collapse of the nation.

As far as we can judge to-day from the most recent documents, it would seem that at a certain moment the moral of the German Army and its generals was greatly diminished. In support of this theory we have Hindenburg's telegram, dispatched when the peace proposals were being discussed in the Reichstag: "That he could no longer hold his troops, that they were getting out of hand, and that without an armistice he would be forced to surrender with the whole army."

This mentality was not that of the last moment merely, for on October 1st Ludendorff declared:

"We are in a terrible position; at any moment the front may be broken through."

Worn-out armies, demoralized generals and the indignation of a people disappointed in all its hopes—such, it seems, were the real causes of the collapse.

The polemics of the German writers are, however, extremely contradictory. Colonel Bauer, a friend and comrade of Ludendorff's, declares that "the third and last offensive was a failure because Ludendorff had sacrificed his best troops in useless offensives."

In the *Frankfürter Zeitung* of January 26, 1919, Major Paulus writes:

> To say that the interior was the sole cause of our defeat and that it forced Ludendorff to request the Chancellor to enter into negotiations with a view to an immediate armistice is not correct. By the end of September 1918 the German Army was already in retreat upon the line of resistance Antwerp–Brussels–Namur–Thionville–Metz. Consequently it was not the home front but the High Command which, by its lack of capacity and determination, was responsible for the collapse.

In short, the results of modern warfare are due to a series of different causes which we must study separately so that we may grasp the effect of each. Let us now attempt to do this.

3. *Various Causes which help to decide the Issue of a War.*

The Effects of the Offensive and Defensive Spirits.—To judge by the lessons of the recent war, we might say of the offensive what Æsop says of the tongue, that it is the best and the worst of things. The offensive impulse caused our first defeats, but it also won us our final successes.

The offensive impulse inspired our leaders incessantly at the beginning of the war, when victory seemed assured. It then represented the doctrine of the École de Guerre.

In consequence of repeated defects this doctrine quickly

lost its prestige—lost it to such a point that in spite of our superior strength we remained immobilized before the German lines for the space of four years; while the Germans themselves, wishing to terminate their operations in Russia before attacking us, remained on the defensive. In the end, as I have remarked, the principle of the inviolability of the fronts became a dogma in the minds of our generals.

The fact that the offensive spirit is only one of the various elements whose sum means victory is proved by the failure of the Germans in their last three great attacks, notably that of May 27, 1918, which, having brought Ludendorff to the left bank of the Marne, ended in a repulse.

The soldier's moral is evidently stimulated by the offensive and depressed by the defensive. But he is still more depressed by an unsuccessful offensive.

This is just what occurred in 1914, at the outset of the campaign. The Germans, familiar with the doctrine of our Staff, knew that we should attack, and that by retiring they would draw us on in pursuit of them to battlefields chosen by themselves, notably at Sarrebourg and Morhange. There they obtained conspicuous victories.

The offensive represents, in reality, a moral force which must be supported by material forces, and these must be sufficient and skilfully directed. If the preparations are inadequate or faulty, the losses will be high in proportion as the offensive spirit of the troops is more energetic. Of this we had many unhappy experiences during the war.

To sum up: superiority of fire and of tactics seem to be the conditions of a successful offensive. The reason why our casualties were so enormous is that the Germans were almost always our superiors in artillery.

The Effect of Various Psychological Elements: Ideals, Confidence, Surprise, etc.—In addition to the spirit of the offensive there are certain other psychological elements: ideals, surprise, unity of command, etc., which we have already examined, whose influence is incontestable, on condition that it is combined with other factors.

Thus we may state that President Wilson exaggerated greatly in speaking of "the irresistible spiritual force of the United States Army, which terrified the enemy."

The influence of this moral force was undeniably great, but it would have been very small without material support.

Confidence represents another psychological element of considerable effect.

Considerable, but very insufficient in itself, and sometimes even dangerous. At the outset of the war our generals were confident of victory, and this confidence contributed to our first reverses. The German generals were equally confident, and as a result they were successively victorious and defeated.

Marshal Foch, in an interview, declared that he had never doubted the issue of the war. "In war," he said, "he who doubts is lost. One must never doubt."

Assuredly; but the Germans, too, never doubted the success of their armies, which did not prevent them from being crushed.

Effect of the Number of Combatants.—The number of the combatants is evidently important, but this importance is not supreme, since for several years the effectives of the Entente, on the French as well as the Russian front, were greatly in excess of those of the Germans, yet we could neither throw them back nor obtain partial successes of any great magnitude.

The reason why the Germans were often victorious in spite of their numerical inferiority is that they were greatly superior to us in the matter of artillery, their methods of fortification in the field, and their initiative.

For a long while we thought the number of combatants more important than the number of guns. This costly mistake contributed very largely to the loss of 1,400,000 men of the 3,000,000 odd whom we managed, by a gigantic effort, to send to the front.

Confidence in the power of numbers, which exercised an absolute fascination over our conduct of the war, still intervenes in the interpretation of its results.

According to many military writers, the Germans

having engaged all their forces during the great offensives of March, April and May, cannot have retained any available reserves, whereas our reserves were not exhausted. Hence their defeat.

In reality, on July 1, 1918, the enemy still had more than 1,400,000 men in France, though they were distributed over much too extensive a front, which made them weak at all points.

Thenceforth it was probable that massed attacks at a number of points would break this feeble barrier. But to do this we should have to make up our minds to multiply our offensives in various sectors. Now, the Germans had no reason to suppose that we should ever multiply our attacks, for during a four years' campaign we had never ventured to attempt such an operation. All our previous attacks had been directed toward very limited objectives.

This was the doctrine of the superior command. Fortunately, it was not Marshal Foch's when he became the master, but he met with a great deal of opposition to the execution of his orders.

General Mangin, in an interview published by *Le Matin*, said that before his attack on July 18th he was advised to exercise prudence.

"Be careful," he was told; "go forward softly, and occupy only positions in which you could pass the winter."

The first advances having succeeded beyond all hopes, it was plainly indicated that they should be continued, now here, now there, along the whole of the front. Yet it was not without hesitation that this general offensive was undertaken. In the interview cited above General Mangin relates that he was ordered to stop it just when the enemy was retreating on every side. The intervention of the Generalissimo was required before he was allowed to go forward.

To-day we may regard it as probable that while the skilful employment of reserves played a certain part in the final collapse of the Germans, its influence was by no means preponderant.

The really important factor was that we were able to profit by a successful attack directed against the enemy's

flank by continuing an uninterrupted series of vigorous blows all along the line.

The Influence of the Eastern Front.—Here we come to one of the causes of Germany's defeat which is scarcely mentioned by French or foreign writers on military subjects, yet which was, perhaps, of all the influences hitherto enumerated, one of the most important.

The abandonment of the struggle by the Bulgars and the Turks as a result of our successes in the East had a demoralizing effect on the German generals, and also on the population.

The Turks and Bulgars being out of the war and the Austrian troops in retreat, the way to Vienna, and consequently to Germany, was left open and unguarded. The idea that the French might in their turn ravage the German provinces as our departments were ravaged was so appalling to the Germans that any sort of peace was judged preferable, which doubtless explains why they so hastily begged for an armistice, despite the severity of the conditions imposed.

We see what success the initiative of the Salonika expedition enjoyed, although in France it was opposed by a great many politicians and by the Staff. For several years it played no very useful part, but at the last moment, when an energetic leader replaced the temporizing general who had commanded it, it became the indirect cause of our victory in the West.

If we had only waited a few weeks before granting the Armistice we might have signed it in Berlin, which would have had a very different moral effect to signing it on our own territory. The Germans could not then have maintained that they did not suffer a military defeat.

* * *

The foregoing sketch gives some idea of the problems with which the history of the Great War is bristling.

Our outline of the war, although chiefly confined to the domain of psychology, shows what uncertainty surrounds even those facts which are in appearance the most easily understood.

In historical events the smallest parcels of truth are surrounded by clouds which make it very difficult to reach and seize them, and the same facts may be completely transformed by the illusions and passions of their narrators.

We have hardly emerged from the war, and already we see how contradictory are the published accounts in respect of the essential points, from the causes of the conflict to the causes of the German collapse.

It will not be granted to the men of to-day to learn very much of the actual truth concerning our great epopee. In history, Truth is always the offspring of Time. It required more than fifty years of research to elucidate the causes of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo.

We cannot demand the truth from the actors in the great dramas of which they were the heroes. Carried away by events, they were subdued to them and often did not even understand them.

And this is why, in history as in sociology, we must endeavour to attain to the general, not the particular. Then only does the horizon become visible, and then, above the confusion of ephemeral phenomena, we perceive the interaction of the eternal laws which direct their course.

CHAPTER V

THE COST OF MODERN WARFARE

It is probable that no war, since the beginning of the world, has cost as much in men and material as that which has just ended. The reason for this is evident. Never before did whole peoples fight at close quarters, and the ancient means of destruction cannot be compared with those which modern science has placed in the hands of the combatants.

At first sight one would be inclined to say that this gigantic struggle has been equally ruinous to the victors and to the vanquished; but in reality England has derived an enormous increase of territory. She has acquired all the German colonies and established her protectorate over Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Persia, etc. Only the future can tell whether this aggrandizement will have been to her advantage. For the moment her hegemony has replaced that of Germany, but history shows that hegemonies based upon military force have never been enduring and have engendered many wars.

These considerations, however, are independent of the actual statement of the losses caused by the war, to which this chapter is devoted.

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Without achieving absolute accuracy, the following statistics will give some idea of the frightful losses which the world has suffered.

The most reliable figures would appear to be those given by Mr. Wilson in a speech delivered at Tacoma, U.S.A., on September 13, 1919. The speaker accompanied them by the following comment: "If I had

not obtained these figures from official sources, I could not have accepted them as correct."

And this, according to him, is what the war cost the Allied Powers: Great Britain, £8,304,000,000; France,[1] £5,300,000,000; Russia, £3,700,000,000; Italy £2,680,000,000. The total, including Belgium, Japan, and the other smaller States, is £25,584,000,000.

The Central Powers expended the following sums: Germany, £8,120,000,000; Austria, £4,368,000,000; Turkey and Bulgaria, £624,000,000; a total of £13,104,000,000. This gives as the total for the whole cost of the war £38,688,000,000.

Casualties.—The Russian losses in killed were 1,700,000; the German, 1,600,000; the French, 1,385,000; the British, 900,000; the American (U.S.A.), 50,000. The total for all belligerents was 7,450,000.

As for the material losses suffered by France, the most accurate evaluation was given in a remarkable inquiry published in March 1920 by one of the Ministers who collaborated in the Peace Treaty, M. André Tardieu. Speaking of the attempts of certain Powers to modify the Treaty of Versailles, he says:

"If the treaty is not executed, I ask what will become of France?—France, whose debt (*estimating the foreign debt at the current rate of exchange*) is 257,000,000,000 francs; France, who paid, in 1913, 4,000,000,000 francs in taxation and this year will pay 18,000,000,000; France, completely deprived of the industry of a region which used to produce 94 per cent. of our woollen fabrics, 90 per cent. of our linen thread, 90 per cent. of our metallic

[1] This figure is apparently erroneous. According to the official figures given in the Chamber of Deputies, our total expenditure from August 6, 1914, to December 31, 1919, was about £8,000,000,000. In the Senate M. Antonin Dubost gave another estimate. "In all, our financial obligations are represented by a sum of £16,000,000,000; and this sum exceeds the estimate of our national wealth before the war." In reality, no one can at present calculate accurately what the war has cost.

(The above figures are calculated on the normal rate of exchange. As the rate differed at the periods of the speeches cited, the figures will not bear close comparison.—*Trans.*)

ores, 83 per cent. of our cast iron, 70 per cent. of our sugar, 60 per cent. of our cotton fabrics, 55 per cent. of our coal, 45 per cent. of our electrical energy; France, who has lost a third part of her merchant marine; France, whose railways show a deficit of more than 2,000,000,000 francs; whose commercial balance is a deficit of ten times that sum; France, who has left on the battlefields 57 per cent. of her men between nineteen and thirty-four years of age."

* * *

All these figures are worthy of meditation. It is obvious that if reason had any influence whatever over the conduct of the nations it would be long indeed before such wars could be fought again. But the affective memory of the nations is so short and the sentimental and mystic impulses which hurl them against one another so powerful that our hopes of peace for the future are very uncertain. At the moment of writing these lines Poland is at war with all her neighbours. Italy and the Balkan peoples are threatening one another. Germany is the struggling prey of the furies of civil war, and other countries too have fallen victims to intestine hostilities. The wind of madness which has blown upon the world is not yet stilled.

BOOK IV

THE PROPAGATION OF BELIEFS AND THE ORIENTATION OF OPINIONS

CHAPTER I

HOW OPINIONS AND BELIEFS ARE CREATED

OPINIONS and beliefs having played an essential part during the war, it will be as well to devote a few pages to the mechanism of their formation.

I shall first sum up in a few lines the principles expounded in my book on *Les Opinions et les Croyances.*[1]

Belief is an act of faith which results in the acceptance of an assertion or a doctrine as a whole and without discussion. Knowledge is derived only from observation and experiment. Belief and knowledge are therefore very different things, for the source of belief is an unconscious acceptance, while the source of knowledge is observation and experiment interpreted by reason.

It is very difficult to obtain knowledge and very easy to acquire beliefs.

Belief is propagated chiefly by suggestion and mental contagion. When it becomes collective it acquires an irresistible power.

Opinions may have a rational origin, that is, they may be derived from experiment and reason, but they are as a rule merely beliefs in process of formation.

While opinions and beliefs have usually sentimental or mystical origins, knowledge can be derived through the understanding only.

* * *

[1] 1 vol. in 18mo, 14th edition (*Bibliothèque de Philosophie scientifique*). E. Flammarion.

Most opinions emanate from the social environment of those who profess them. Soldiers, magistrates, artisans, sailors, etc., hold the opinions of their group, and consequently arrive at very similar judgements. Surrounded by the ideas of their group, they lose their individuality and have only collective opinions. The modern man is therefore tending to become more and more collective.

As we cannot here examine in detail the elements which cause the birth, growth and disappearance of opinions and beliefs, I will refer the reader to the book which I have devoted to this inquiry, and will confine myself to repeating, with various examples, the enumeration of the great sources of opinion : affirmation, repetition, prestige, suggestion and contagion.

Their effect, of course, varies according to the mental condition of the persons influenced, and, above all, accordingly as these persons are isolated individuals or members of collectivities.

A few instances will suffice to reveal, in recent events, the activity of these various elements of persuasion.

* * *

The first two, affirmation and repetition, were constantly employed by the German Government, especially at the beginning of the war. It was required to prove against all evidence that the English and the Russians had treacherously attacked Germany with the aid of France, who, in order to make war inevitable, had sent aeroplanes to bombard Nuremberg.

These assertions, repeated in a variety of forms by the German Press, were accepted without discussion, and we may say that of seventy millions of Germans there was not one, apart from the rulers of the country, who was not convinced of the crafty aggression of the Allies.

The famous " Manifesto of the 93 Intellectuals " proved that such an opinion was rooted in the most enlightened minds.

The supposed attack upon Germany by jealous rivals provoked an explosion of indignant fury among scholars and scientists, who were nevertheless men accustomed to

weigh evidence. Thus the celebrated psychologist Wundt wrote these words, already quoted in one of my previous volumes: "No, this war is not a true war on the part of our enemies; it is not even a war at all, for war, too, has its rights and its laws. It is a shameful attack by brigands."

It is obvious that minds not hallucinated by the repeated assertions of the German Government would soon have discovered, by the perusal of the diplomatic dispatches published at the beginning of the conflict, that Great Britain, possessing no army, unprepared, and governed, like France, by professional pacifists, had made desperate efforts to prevent the war. But the declarations of the German Government were so categorical and so repeated that they had created a blind faith against which reason could find no foothold.

The general conviction of the Germans in respect of the origins of the war was slightly shaken, but only very slightly, by the publication of the memoirs of Prince Lichnowski, who was German Ambassador to England when the war broke out. He proved clearly that Great Britain had done everything to avoid the conflagration. This confession exasperated those who were convinced of the contrary, but did not convert them to the truth.

So far was it from converting them that the ex-Vice-Chancellor of the Empire, Herr Helfferich, declared in one of his speeches: "England, profiting by the opportunity afforded by the Serajevo murder, appealed from pacific effort to armed force. Thus the war has far outstripped its original cause; it has become a conflict between the British domination of the world and the free development of the peoples."

We have seen what are the results of affirmation and repetition. They transform the most obvious errors into apparent truths. No doubt the actual truth will be discovered at a later period, but not until error has produced irreparable results.

* * *

Mental contagion is, after affirmation and repetition, one of the most active agents of persuasion.

It constitutes a physiological phenomenon resulting not only in the imitation of certain actions but in the unconscious acceptance of emotions and beliefs.

Mental contagion is observed in all creatures, from the animals to man, above all when they are members of a crowd. Acting upon the deeper strata of the subconscious, it is almost entirely immune to the action of will or reason.

Most emotional states—courage and fear, for example—may become contagious. Charity, solidarity and devotion are likewise contagious. The war has furnished many examples of this. The instinct to do evil is also, unhappily, extremely contagious.

The power of mental contagion is immense, and few men are capable of escaping it. Under its influence the character may, for the time being, undergo profound transformations. The hardened pacifist may become a heroic warrior and the peaceful bourgeois a savage sectary.

It is by mental contagion that opinions and beliefs are propagated and societies are stabilized. It consequently represents one of the greatest forces known to history.

The influence of mental contagion becomes preponderant in those critical periods of national evolution in which unforeseen events disturb the habitual equilibrium of mental life. The individual is at such times very subject to influence, and will unhesitatingly sacrifice himself under the influence of contagion due to example.

Of this history furnishes us with innumerable proofs, notably in Russia, where there has always been an abundance of sects requiring various mutilations or even suicide from their adepts. When towards the end of the seventeenth century prophets began to preach suicide by fire, they quickly recruited numbers of disciples, who, having built huge pyres, flung themselves into the flames with their prophets. More than twenty thousand perished thus in the space of a few years.

It was by mental contagion, too, that in our days the vast Russian Army was dissolved in a few months. Social-

ism was herein triumphant far more by contagion than by virtue of its chimerical promises.

The power of mental contagion cannot be exaggerated. It is capable—above all in collectivities—of dominating weak characters to the point of inspiring them to actions absolutely opposed to their convictions.

In a volume devoted to the psychological analysis of the French Revolution I have demonstrated the large part played therein by mental contagion.

One of the most striking is cited by M. Denys Cochin from the unpublished memoirs of Louis-Philippe.

On the eve of the day when the Convention was to decide the fate of Louis XVI, the Duc d'Orléans protested with indignation against the idea that he could vote for the death of the King. But he did vote for it. His feeble character was unable to resist the mental contagion of the assembly.

Having returned home, where he was no longer subject to this influence, the Duc burst into tears, declaring to his children that he was unworthy to embrace them, and added: "My misery is more than I can bear; I can no longer imagine how I could have been led into doing what I did."

And he really could not understand it, for it is only in our days that the progress of psychology has enabled us to explain such actions.

The influence of mental contagion was manifested many a time during the recent war; not only in the acts of solidarity and tenacious courage performed by the soldiers at the front, but under certain circumstances of civilian life.

We saw its effects in Paris when the exploding bombs assembled in the same cellar persons of very diverse origin. All these people, separated by the barriers of social position or intellectual and sentimental differences, felt suddenly that they were members of the same family. The Race was present, an invisible goddess, uniting all hearts by mental contagion. Everybody was calm, obscurely feeling that a word or a gesture that spoke of anxiety might evoke in his neighbour a degree of

mental distress that would quickly spread from one person to the next. The wave of collective panic never gathered itself up, because the wave of courage, sustained by mental contagion, was sufficiently powerful to prevent it from arising.

Beliefs spread by mental contagion cannot be opposed by arguments, but only by contrary beliefs, propagated with the help of leaders who possess the peculiar art of exciting crowds.

* * *

On a level with mental contagion as a source of opinions, and therefore as a motive of conduct, we may place prestige. Persons possessed of prestige find it easy to sway the multitude. The Germans, without discussion, allowed themselves to be massacred in close-packed ranks to please their Kaiser, a personage endowed with great prestige; for everyone knew, as he was wont to remind them in his speeches, that he was the representative of God on earth and spoke in His name.

But in spite of the authority conferred on the German Cæsar by the divine partnership of which his people was convinced, his prestige was never equal to that enjoyed by Napoleon, even after his fall.

He, although he did not claim to represent any divinity, succeeded, on returning from the island of Elba, in conquering almost single-handed a great kingdom defended by a powerful army. This prestige survived his death, since, from the depth of the tomb, it anointed his nephew Emperor.

The part played by prestige in the life of the nations is thus considerable. The laws, institutions and other elements of social life are maintained principally by their prestige and vanish as soon as it disappears.

If modern societies are in a very shaky condition, it is because the prestige which used to surround certain moral values has disappeared.

* * *

Among the elements of persuasion we have yet to

consider suggestion. This may be exercised in very different ways. One of its most important agents is the Press.

The newspapers are to-day the great sources of opinion. The newspaper, in fact, employs all the means of persuasion whose action we have expounded: affirmation, repetition, contagion and prestige. However independent the reader, the repetition of the same ideas in different forms will eventually influence him without his becoming aware of the fact and will modify his opinions.

During the war the Germans made great use of this means of persuasion. Not only did the Government control the majority of the German newspapers; it also devoted enormous sums to the purchase of the greatest possible number of newspapers in other countries. A celebrated trial revealed the fact that it did not hesitate to spend £480,000 in the attempt to acquire an important French newspaper.

It was thanks to the Press that the Pan-Germans, supported by the Government, slowly trained the German people to long for war. We know, too, that it was by means of a Press largely subsidized for several years that Bismarck created the tide of opinion whence resulted the war of 1870, the origin of Germanic unity. Although he possessed the material power he did not dare to make use of it until he had conquered public opinion.

Opinion, in short, has in all ages dominated the world.

"It is," said Napoleon, "an invincible, mysterious power which nothing can resist."

He who makes himself the master of opinion may lead a people to perform the most heroic actions as well as to enter upon the most absurd adventures.

The most eminent statesmen have always had the power of directing opinion; the mediocre politician confines himself to following it.

* * *

In addition to the persuasion produced by the newspapers there is the persuasion exercised by certain

speakers. The newspaper and the orator are pursuing the same end—conviction—but they arrive at it by different paths.

The orator capable of swaying crowds possesses a personal influence which enables him to dispense with argument.

The reader may remember the story of the actor, the idol of the public, who wagered that he would rouse a whole hall full of people to enthusiasm by pronouncing, with suitable gestures, phrases completely devoid of meaning, which he would intersperse at random with such illusive words as "native land, honour, the flag," etc. He was frantically applauded.

We may compare with this instance one related by M. Bergson, who accompanied in the United States a brilliant orator whose duty it was to act as a propagandist for the Allies upon a public absolutely ignorant of French. His success, however, was enormous.

> From the first words there was, as it were, a sort of physical adhesion on the part of the audience, which allowed itself to be lulled by the music of the speech. As the orator grew animated and his gestures more energetically expressed his ideas and emotions, his hearers, inwardly allured by this movement, adopted the rhythm of the emotion expressed, closely following the ideas and roughly understanding the phrase even when they did not grasp the words.

To arouse, increase or abolish emotion is the whole art of the orator. Emotions will always get the better of even the most reliable of rational arguments.

* * *

This enumeration of the factors of opinion is only a very summary sketch. To render it less incomplete I should have to show how these factors influence different mentalities, for it is obvious that all will not react in the same fashion.

In many instances they will at first succeed only in creating convictions. This is something, but a conviction is useful only when it is rendered sufficiently intense to determine action, and, above all, a continued action which will yield to nothing.

This form of active conviction is that which the men who direct opinion must endeavour to produce, and above all to maintain.

In the recent war, success was achieved by those combatants whose convictions were strong enough and their energy great enough to enable them to hold out the longest.

The elements whence opinions and beliefs are derived constitute a psychological arsenal of considerable power but difficult to manage.

A few examples will show how the Germans were able to utilize them, and what results they obtained therefrom.

CHAPTER II

PSYCHOLOGICAL WEAPONS

In an ingenious work of fiction one of the best known of English novelists allows our world to be invaded by the inhabitants of a distant planet. Suppose the same visitors had arrived during the war to request a German general to inform them briefly as to the respective value of the various weapons employed in battle: what reply would they have obtained?

Without a doubt the warrior would have explained, with pride, some of those great inventions which had brought the art of destruction to so high a degree: aeroplanes enabling the airman to destroy the miracles of art and exterminate the inhabitants of cities; quick-firing machine-guns capable of mowing down in a few minutes thousands of young and vigorous men, the hope of the future; poisonous gases enveloping armies in a deadly cloud. He would have shown them, too, the ingenious submarines which send instantaneously to the bottom of the sea great liners filled with unoffending passengers.

If, wishing to complete the data as to the value of the mechanisms producing such results, the visitors had inquired as to the final result of the extermination of so many millions of men, it would have been necessary to confess that the only decisive result obtained so far was the general ruin of Europe.

And if these planetary personages, having learned of the principal events of the war, had inquired into the nature of the weapons which were able, in a few weeks, to disintegrate the Russian armies, they would have been informed that these vast legions of combatants were vanquished solely by certain immaterial weapons more powerful than any artillery, namely, by psychological weapons.

* * *

And what is the nature of this psychological arsenal whose power has been proved so great?

It consists simply of the ability to perform on the keyboard of the moral factors which were briefly enumerated in the last chapter, but without stating on what elements of the personality they act nor how they should be employed.

They are not easily applied. The mental keyboard is delicate and is dangerous in the hands of an unskilled performer. But in the hands of a clever player it enabled Germany to disintegrate armies which had previously displayed the greatest valour; and in the hands of a clumsy performer it raised up irreducible enemies against her.

The success of the Germans in Russia proves that they had eventually become experts in a branch of science formerly unknown to them.

At the beginning of the war their inability to enter into the thoughts, emotions, and consequently the motives of conduct of other peoples, was prodigious. It made the greatest peoples on earth their enemies; first the English, whose neutrality could have been so easily secured; then the Italians, and lastly the people of the United States.

The first cause of their repulses was the belief that all men are to be measured by the same standard and obey the same motives.

Guided solely by erroneous principles, the Germans began by employing only threats, "frightfulness" and corruption as psychological weapons.

Quite efficient in their action upon certain inferior minds, these weapons were powerless against such peoples as were stabilized by a long past. Belgium allowed herself to be burned and tortured without yielding.

On English soil their threats recruited five millions of volunteers. In the United States the only result of threats and conspiracies was to destroy their neutrality, which Germany should at all costs have maintained.

* * *

Taught by experience, the Germans eventually realized that they had been profoundly mistaken as to the means of influencing the minds of the peoples. It was then that they substituted, for the crude methods of intimidation, other more subtle and more reliable procedures.

They realized, in the first place, that the best means of disarming an adversary is to appear to adopt his conceptions. Accordingly, they began to speak of universal brotherhood, the League of Nations, etc.

All means were employed that might influence public opinion, which in modern times has become the supreme ruler of the world. Let a people be persuaded, as the Russians were, that it ought to cease fighting, and the mere influence of such a conviction will cause it immediately to confess itself defeated and to become the slave of its conqueror.

Well aware that they could hope for nothing from the rulers of the country, the Germans understood that they must act upon the mind of the crowd through political parties able to influence it. Suddenly fair-spoken, they proceeded to discuss pacifism, disarmament, peace without annexations or indemnities, etc., all conceptions heartily despised by their philosophers.

The results obtained by these new methods were incontestable. The Italians themselves attribute the disaster of Caporetto, when several army corps surrendered without fighting, to the Socialist propaganda in Italy of agents in German pay.

In Russia the results obtained were still more far-reaching. Even under Tsarism the Germans had sought to achieve a separate peace by buying several Ministers, who hindered the manufacture of arms and betrayed Rumania. After the Revolution the Germans assisted the Bolshevist movement by means of enormous subsidies.

The consequences were tremendous. Even if completely defeated, the Tsar would never have signed a peace comparable to that to which the Bolshevist leaders subscribed. It gave Germany provinces containing 55,000,000 of inhabitants, among them the Ukraine, which is regarded as the granary of Europe. It has justly been said that "the subjection of Russia meant German domination

not merely from the North Sea to Asia Minor, but as far as the Arctic Ocean in the north and the Urals in the east." But for the victory of the Allies, Russia would in a few years have been completely Germanized.

* * *

The activities of the German agents in various countries were for a long while almost unperceived. Not until the United States Attorney-General inquired into the matter was it discovered that the German Embassy had a credit of £10,000,000 at its disposal for propaganda in America.

Identical intrigues were practised all over the world: in India, the West Indies, Java, Canada, etc. The Germans subsidized the local newspapers and recruited bands of revolutionists to provoke strikes and riots. The Spanish newspapers have published documents proving that the German Ambassador in Spain paid anarchists to organize strikes and disorders intended to overthrow the Ministry, which was not sufficiently Germanophile.

In France the propagandists were equally tenacious, but nothing was known of them until some notorious trials revealed their influence. The Germans spent money without counting, since they did not hesitate, as I have already related, to pay £480,000 for the purchase of a single newspaper.

* * *

The example of Russia proved to the Germans that Socialism was their best ally.

Our illuminates of the Socialist church lost none of their illusions during the war. In their dreams they saw Social Democracy and Internationalism attacking Pan-Germanism and forcing the Empire to make peace.

Nothing dispelled this blindness. It was useless to show them the German Socialist newspapers, such as *Vorwärts*, which were demanding annexations and asserting that Social Democracy itself, if it came into power, would be obliged to adopt an Imperialist policy or it would be swept away within twenty-four hours. Another newspaper of the same political persuasion stated: "We are qualified in our capacity of Socialists to say that we must have territories in order to extend our agriculture."

Professor Laskine cited this quotation from a leading Socialist review: "The most ardent supporters of Liebknecht themselves are unwilling to surrender either Belgium or any of the occupied territories."

Our Socialists, whose propaganda in the workshops and factories was so very nearly disastrous, dreamed of obtaining peace by exerting pressure upon their rulers. The Germans naturally favoured this campaign, which had served them so well in Russia, where it resulted in civil war and the dismemberment of her great empire.

* * *

Psychological weapons can be fought with psychological weapons. To the Socialist apostles ready to accept a German peace we ought to have opposed others who would have reminded the workers of the life led by the peoples subjected to Germany.

Without mentioning the Belgians deported to Germany and driven into the factories, where they were forced to perform the most strenuous work for negligible wages, the fate of the Poles in Prussian Poland before the war was sufficiently illuminating. There the peasant was expropriated as soon as a German coveted his land, while his children were publicly whipped if they attempted to speak their mother-tongue.

These facts were always overlooked by our Socialists. They could not, however, disregard the fact that if Germany had succeeded in imposing her peace, with the economic clauses which she wished to enforce, the lot of the French worker would have become utterly wretched. Thanks to their equipment, and above all to their coalmines, of which they have more than their share, while we have less, the German costs of manufacture are much lower than the French. To produce merchandise at rates which would make it possible to sell them, the French workers would have been forced to accept wages which would just prevent them from dying of starvation. The German peace would have been disastrous to them. The people understood this despite the Socialist propaganda, and it was this that saved us.

* * *

We see from the foregoing pages how dangerous and unreal were the various peace proposals made by the Germans, and their apparent acceptance of the plans for disarmament, a League of Nations and other formulæ, which were utterly despised by the German philosophers and their sectaries.

This acceptance of such measures was never anything more than a piece of moral strategy. It was based, however, upon perfectly correct psychological ideas.

Suppose, indeed, that the German diplomatists had succeeded in inducing their adversaries to discuss the peace of conciliation whose principles they accepted, including the restitution of Belgium. As at Brest-Litovsk, these diplomatists would at first have appeared very conciliatory, accepting all the accessory claims in order to prolong discussion and thus increase, in the minds of the combatants, the hope of the peace so universally desired.

The influence of this hope would gradually have maintained the potential of the energies previously sustained by the necessity of fighting. In the face of the increasing certainty of peace, the idea of recommencing the war would have been profoundly antipathetic.

At this precise juncture Germany's true intentions would have been revealed. No doubt, she would have said, we promised to restore Belgium, but it is necessary for our own security that we should retain Antwerp, etc.

Such conditions being impossible of acceptance, the Allies would have been forced to resume the conflict, but this time under deplorable conditions, having lost the warlike energy which constitutes one of the surest elements of victory. The moral factors of success would have been transferred to Germany. Profiting by the infinite credulity of the people, their rulers would easily have persuaded them that the Allies had refused to make peace, with the object of destroying Germany.

The dangerous properties of the psychological weapons employed against us by the Germans is obvious. They were almost more formidable than her guns.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL UPHEAVALS: THEIR RAPIDITY OF PROPAGATION

HAVING already devoted a volume to the psychology of revolutions, I cannot again deal with this subject *in extenso*, but will now confine myself to examining, as an example of a great political upheaval, that which resulted in the disintegration of Russia.

We shall find in this all the elements of revolutions which have been dealt with elsewhere: discontent, the activity of agitators, mental contagion, the character of the insurgent people, etc.

In Russia, discontent and hope were the great cultural media of the Revolution. As in all similar instances, the united wills of the people, stimulated by influences acting in the same direction, became a torrent that no barriers could withstand.

It was above all by mental contagion that the Russian Revolution was propagated. To understand its effect upon the Russians one must first of all understand their psychology.

The Russian mentality is built upon a very different plan from ours. Lacking an ancestral framework, it has no stability. Its convictions are fugitive convictions resulting merely from the impulse of the moment. The Russian is sincere when he enters into an engagement and no less sincere when he fails to carry it out.

This extreme impulsiveness leaves the Russian mentality at the mercy of all that allures it, and the Russian's morality is powerless against temptation. From the peasant to the Minister, the Russian is easily bought. The course of the war proved this only too clearly. We know now that before the Revolution the President of

Council and various Ministers, in the pay of Germany, were making preparations for a separate peace.

The only influences capable of firmly controlling the Russian mentality are mystical convictions. Propagated by mental contagion, they give it ballast and guidance as long as their action continues.

However absurd the object of a mystical sect, however great the sacrifices which it requires of its adepts, it is always certain of finding plenty of adherents in Russia. Only in the midst of such a people could such sects as that of the Skopzy prosper; sects which even in these days impose the most hideous mutilations upon the faithful; or such deluded creatures as the notorious monk Rasputin, whose influence at Court was so great that he could obtain the appointment or dismissal of Ministers or generals at will.

Russia, in short, has a primitive mentality and is unfit to rule herself. Mystical convictions and the knout are the only means which have succeeded in governing the country hitherto.

* * *

Over such mentalities simple ideals, full of promises and hopes, exert a great contagious influence. And the Bolshevist promises were extremely seductive.

First of all, and above all, the Bolsheviks promised peace, a peace ardently desired by the multitudes fighting for a cause which they did not understand and bewildered by instances of treachery which were only too visible.

Then there was the seductive idea of absolute equality, which was verified by such appointments as the promotion of a common sailor to be Minister of the Marine and that of a non-commissioned officer who, overleaping every rank, was made Commander-in-Chief of the armies.

Lastly, the peasants were promised the ownership of the soil, and the workers, who were to become sole owners of the factories, were promised wealth.

To realize so many promises called for a great deal of money. The German subsidies and the methodical pillage of private fortunes provided enough to begin with. The

mob was persuaded that an earthly paradise was about to be established, and the spread of the Revolution was instantaneous.

This rapid propagation of certain revolutionary movements is a phenomenon which has been observed in many revolutions, whether religious, like the Reformation, or political, like the Revolution of 1848.

The almost immediate spread of Islamism is one of the most striking examples of this rapid propagation. It was so sudden and so far-reaching that historians unfamiliar with certain of the psychological laws of belief give up the attempt to explain it. I will relate a fragment of this typical history which proves, experimentally, the instantaneous nature of the propagation of beliefs unsupported by any element of reason.

* * *

Let us go back some twelve centuries and transport ourselves to the court of the King of Persia, a most mighty sovereign who loved to call himself the King of Kings.

It is the eighth century of the Christian era, just before the commencement of the Hegira. The vast empires which formerly spread over the East have disappeared. Rome is no more than a shadow; Byzantium is with difficulty maintaining the heritage of the bygone civilizations. Persia alone is increasing day by day.

No human wisdom could have foreseen that in the pantheon of the gods a new divinity was about to be born who would presently subject to his laws a great part of the inhabited earth.

Seated upon a marble, gold-encrusted throne in the great audience-hall of his palace, the King of Persia was musing. The last of that illustrious dynasty of the Sassanides, who had ruled his ancient empire for centuries, he had brilliantly continued their work. From the Indus to the Euphrates men feared his might. Why should not his territories become as vast as in the glorious age of the great Achemenides, the contemporaries of Alexander?

Thus meditating on his future majesty, the king gazed

with an absent glance at the envoys who were bringing him tribute, when suddenly a slave approached, informing him that some Arab emissaries, ill-clad but of haughty bearing, were insisting upon an audience.

Arabs! What could they want of him, these remote nomads, ignored by history, of whom he had heard but a vague rumour?

Curious to learn, the king gave orders that they should be brought before him. They appeared, approached the throne, and, without prostrating themselves, as custom demanded, addressed the monarch in these arrogant words:

"The Caliph of Mecca sends us to you to give you this choice: adopt the faith of the Prophet, or pay tribute, or behold your empire destroyed by our swords."

Irritated by such insolence, the monarch made as though to sign to the guard, who, motionless as a statue of bronze, stood behind him with his long sabre in hand. Then, changing his mind, he shrugged his shoulders and murmured disdainfully:

"They are madmen. Let them be sent away."

Three months later the King of Kings was cast down from his throne. His empire fell into the hands of the Arabs. The banner of Islam floated above all the cities of Persia. There it floats to-day.

The mighty ruler was conquered by armies materially far inferior to his own; but their strength was increased by a mystic faith of whose power he had not dreamed.

We know how swiftly the Arab empire was fated to spread.

In a few years Egypt, Africa and Spain were conquered. France herself was menaced, and it required all the valour of Charles Martel to check the invasion, which advanced as far as Poitiers.

Having founded a vast empire under the impulse of their faith, and a civilization whose vestiges compel our admiration, the Arabs were defeated by other conquerors —first the Moguls and then the Turks; but the mental contagion of powerful convictions compelled the conquerors to adopt the religious faith of the conquered,

who were, for that matter, more civilized than their rulers. Islamism continued its expansion. Having invaded India, it spread to the borders of China, and to-day it is found within them.

* * *

The foundation of the Arab power; the Crusades; the submission of 400,000,000 human beings to the Buddhist faith; the French Revolution; and, in our days, the propagation of Bolshevism, are events of the same nature which only modern psychology can explain.

The rationalistic historians find it very difficult to understand them, and it irritates them to see the stupendous part played in the history of the world by the victims of delusions.

Nevertheless, this part has been preponderant. Under the influence of delusions mighty civilizations have arisen and others have perished. The magnitude of the results being out of all proportion to the slightness of the causes, we may be astonished that the world should have been turned upside down because an inspired or deluded nomad beheld vague visions in his tent. Yet it was so, and from the depths of his tomb this terrible visionary still rules the emotions of many millions of human beings.

* * *

The propagation of certain modern revolutionary movements can only be explained by the mystical fascination of beliefs which promise all men equality, wealth and happiness. It is also favoured by other factors which may be summed up in a few lines.

The great civilizations grow complex as they develop, leaving behind them in their rapid progress a host of human beings who have not the capacity to keep pace with them. They form the vast army of the unadapted, the incapable.

These people are naturally discontented, and, therefore, the enemies of society, in which they do not hold the position of which they consider themselves to be worthy.

All the revolutions have had them as their adepts.

They rose up in France under the Terror, then under the Commune, and to-day they have risen in Russia. At their head are always politicians greedy of wealth or fame, whose noisy altruism is a mask for egoism, often of the lowest type. The world has sometimes lacked a Cato, but never a Catiline.

These incapables exist, though in smaller numbers than elsewhere, in Germany, and her rulers committed a psychological blunder in disregarding the fact. In assisting the Socialist propaganda abroad they showed themselves ignorant of the laws of mental contagion and ran the risk of falling victims to the scourge which they had unloosed. They realized their mistake only when they saw the revolution developing in their own country.

The German prisoners in Russia, who had seen the Bolsheviks at work and willingly assisted in this work, remembered enough of their doctrines to realize that these would mean, for them, escape from an extremely severe discipline. This simple idea of liberation was evidently more seductive than the Pan-German theories, which did not interest the common soldier.

The German rulers found themselves, in respect of the Bolshevism for whose extension they had spent so many millions, in the position of the sorcerer in the old legend, who, knowing the magical formula which would make a torrent gush from the earth, was drowned in it because he did not know the words which would stop its flow.

Owing to the contagious power of popular movements, it is always easier to provoke them than to curb them. Germany as a whole, Prussia and above all Austria, learned this from experience when the Revolution of 1848, spreading by contagion over a great part of Europe, finally reached them. In Austria the revolution resulted in the abdication of the Kaiser Ferdinand in favour of Francis Joseph. The latter was soon reduced to soliciting the assistance of a Russian army to fight the Hungarians, who had declared a Republic. He defeated them only by a long series of massacres.

* * *

The principal object of this chapter has been to show how swiftly religious and revolutionary movements may spread the moment they impress themselves upon the mentality of the crowd.

This fundamental fact enables us to understand the spread of the Bolshevik movement, which we shall examine in subsequent chapters. It should not be compared, as it generally has been, to a political faith, but rather to the great religious upheavals, such as the advent of Islamism.

BOOK V

THE NEW REVOLUTIONARY TEMPEST

CHAPTER I

THE PRESENT FORMS OF POPULAR ASPIRATIONS

One of the great difficulties of the immediate future will be, not to enforce peace externally, but to obtain it internally. Serious symptoms show that this internal peace will be as difficult to secure as that which we must conclude with our enemies.

Moreover, the Socialist propaganda has found a well-tilled soil, thanks to a general discontent which has many causes.

The popular discontent has manifested itself in different countries by innumerable strikes. These have everywhere a new character which clearly differentiates them from previous strikes.

Hitherto the workers' demands have always had a single object—an increase of wages. Never did the strikers attempt to compel the Government to perform certain political actions which belong to the attributions of the State.

We may judge of their present state of mind by the programme presented to the Congress of Railway Workers by one of its more influential members:

> All relations with the Companies and the public authorities must be broken off.
>
> We must be before all a destructive organism. Let us first make a clean sweep; we will rebuild afterwards.
>
> There is no salvation for us apart from the general strike, the parent of revolution. The dictatorship of the proletariat is inspired

by the libertarian communist theory, that is, the direct action of the exploited against the exploiters: the demolition of the present society and opposition to all fresh organizations.

One of the orders of the day, which was voted with enthusiasm, contained the following passage:

Considering that the Russian, Hungarian and German revolutionists are merely applying the principles which we have always upheld and that *the expropriation of capital* remains on the order of the day of our propaganda and our activities,

The assembly broke up amid shouts of "Hurrah for the general strike! Hurrah for the social revolution!"

Strikes are to-day controlled by the leaders of the trade unions, whom the workers obey with a readiness that clearly reveals the need which nearly all men experience of being guided. The leaders unite the uncertain individual wills; they cause a sort of crystallization in an amorphous environment.

To act upon the collectivities subjected to their influence they must possess an imperious will. The leaders of the unions are well aware of this principle and do not allow their brief injunctions to be discussed. A mere gesture was sufficient to cause 500,000 railway servants to go out on strike, quite indifferent as to whether they starved their country.

The demands of the unions, on which the power to declare strikes confers an irresistible strength, increase in proportion as the resistance of the Government diminishes. So far they are only a State within the State, but they are aspiring to become the whole State.

Their claims are often extravagant. In Paris they informed the directors of the theatres that they must not employ artists who were not members of the General Confederation of Labour, and one read in the newspapers that the players in the great subsidized theatres (the Opéra-Français, the Opéra-Comique, the Odéon) "proceeded to the G.C.L. in order to declare that in obedience to the order of the Union which they had just received they were about to go out on strike."

Before long, no doubt, the G.C.L. will order the

Minister for the Fine Arts to refuse non-union painters permission to exhibit in the galleries, and will forbid publishers to issue the works of non-union writers, etc. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the results of which we shall presently examine, would then be realized.

The universal tendency to strike in all countries is an unconscious aspiration of the manual workers to become the masters and replace their employers in the direction of business affairs. The examples of Russia, Germany and Italy prove that this experiment will be an expensive one for those nations that may still attempt to realize it.

Any power that is not counterbalanced is progressively augmented as it absorbs the weaker rival powers, until it perishes of sheer exaggeration. This law is one that is abundantly proved by history.

France, formerly divided into great political parties, is to-day split up into small trade unions, which appear to enjoy absolute power, since each of them possesses the ability to hold up the life of society. Let the bakers' union declare a strike and the country is left without bread. Let the railwaymen refuse to work and the great cities receive no food. And so with the majority of callings.

In reality, however, this power is somewhat illusory. Firstly, because the authors of such strikes are their first victims; secondly, because public opinion, so influential nowadays, finally turns upon these abuses and demands those measures of repression which have become indispensable, but by which all liberties are eventually abolished.

As these partial strikes are becoming more and more inconvenient for everybody, the unions now associated will lose their solidarity and will finally take to fighting one another. The nations have not painfully destroyed the tyranny of kings to submit blindly to the anonymous despotism of labour unions which claim the right to hold up the life of the country at will.

* * *

We are still, to-day, passing through a phase when words, myths and formulæ exercise a sovereign power over the credulous mentality of the crowd.

To enlighten the crowd as to its genuine interests is one of the most necessary tasks of the present moment. Yet hardly a thought is given to it. The politicians seek to please, not to teach.

We have innumerable leagues against alcoholism, depopulation, etc., but none has been founded to teach the masses and to point out the economic realities that condition their life. Very rare to-day are those public speakers who dare to utter aloud those truths which should be made known.

To succeed in teaching the lower classes we must first of all examine the mentality of the working man and fully understand the arguments by which the Socialist agitators delude him; we must not disdain the crude oratorical methods which influence the crowd, nor must we hesitate to explain in detail the economic laws which are beginning to govern the world and which have no respect for our dreams or our desires.

To an active faith we must oppose a faith equally active. Apostles, as we cannot repeat too often, can only be fought by apostles.

* * *

This task of instruction is urgent. The minds of all must be forced to look the present situation in the face. Our crushing debt cannot be diminished unless we manufacture abundantly enough to export our products. To import without exporting will threaten us with ruin in the near future. Now, our imports are increasing considerably, while our exports are continually dwindling.

The constant attacks of the Socialists upon capital are doing a great deal to hamper the expansion of our industry. An English statesman has rightly declared that we shall not know for ten years who has won the war. We may almost as safely assert that the nation which has really won it will be that in which the doctrines of Socialism have the least influence.

If it seems that the situation of the United States must very soon be greatly superior to that of Europe, this is largely because class hatred has been replaced by association. The American working man is perfectly well able to defend his own interests, but he knows also that by considering his employer he is helping to enrich himself. He is likewise convinced that it is private initiative, and not the State intervention continually demanded by the French Socialists, that engenders the progress which leads to national prosperity.

The Americans know all these things, because they have learned them not only by experience, but also in their schools and colleges, from teachers who disdain theories and value realities alone.

* * *

The Germans are heartily congratulating themselves on the disorganization created in enemy countries by the influence of Socialist agitators. We may judge of their feelings by the following passage from a memoir by the German Minister, Erzberger:

Germany's political situation in the world has greatly improved since the Armistice. Six months ago we were confronted, in enemy countries, by a firm and united public opinion. To-day, as might have been expected, individual interests are reappearing and diminishing the strength of the Entente nations. . . . Throughout the Entente there is a tendency to reconcile the Wilsonian principles with the programme of revolutionary Socialism. . . .

We have so weakened France that she will never be able to recover. After such exhaustion the disease will take possession of her.

The present tactics of our enemy is very simple: to encourage Socialist propaganda, the source of so much disorder.

Germany's hopes of revenge are based above all on the part she hopes to play in Russia:

We shall undertake the reconstruction of Russia, and, with such support, we shall be in a position, in ten or fifteen years' time, to hold France at our mercy. The march on Paris will be easier than in 1914, and the Continent will be ours.

We shall find a proof of the assistance which Germany is receiving in France to-day, in the work of disorganizing the country, in a letter addressed to the Government by a group of manufacturers, the following passages from which have been reproduced by a number of newspapers:

> The trade and industry of the Paris district appeal to you in despair. Unprecedented events are occurring in Paris and the suburbs, the continuation of which would endanger not only the peace of society but the very food-supply of the people, to such an extent that it would no longer be possible to guard against them.
>
> Without apparent cause strikes break out, decided upon without the leaders of the labour organizations, *whose equivocal origin it would perhaps not be difficult to expose.*
>
> Immediately, in the whole of the suburbs, in Paris even, the factories, workshops and shops are invaded by gangs of hooligans from fifteen to eighteen years of age, foreigners and disorderly women, who, by threats and violence, compel industrious artisans and employees to leave their work. *Nowhere has it been possible to appeal to the police,* whose function is nevertheless to maintain order and to protect decent citizens. We are complaining not merely of a few attempts upon the liberty of work, which has been so often and so vainly proclaimed, *but of a complete and absolute inertia of the public authorities which leaves tradesmen and manufacturers defenceless and at the mercy of a handful of malefactors.*

We are forewarned of the fate that threatens us. If class hatred persists, it will inevitably end in general ruin and irremediable decadence.

As it has justly been said, the problem is rather to transform men's minds and habits than to seek a more or less ingenious formula for determining wages.

This transformation is difficult because, ever since the recent period when the nations thought and felt in groups, the influence of those who are the victims of mystic illusions has been continually increasing. These eternal dreamers tell us of a new age; but in reality their illusions are common to all ages; the name alone is different. Repeating the time-honoured formulæ of hope which cast a spell upon humanity in the dawn of history, they have returned to the Hebraic myth of the

Promised Land, and are undertaking yet once again the task of Sisyphus, who was condemned by the gods continually to roll a rock to the summit of a mountain, whence it invariably rolled back again.

The prophets of the new beliefs, which aim at regenerating the world, will perhaps succeed in destroying it, but they will be powerless in the face of the economic necessities which govern the life of the nation.

CHAPTER II

THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT AND ITS ILLUSIONS

THE idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat, or, in other words, of the masses, is a natural enough consequence of the illusion which attributes intellectual superiority to numbers. According to this theory, a number of men united are supposed to acquire special abilities which none of them possesses singly. A theory, by the way, which is precisely the reverse of the facts revealed by a study of collective psychology.

Certain ideologists perceive in numbers not merely material and intellectual power, but also faculties of a truly transcendent nature.

Formerly such a conception as this was entertained only by politicians whose beliefs greatly limited their mental horizon. It is therefore somewhat surprising to find President Wilson imagining that the nations possess extremely high abilities of which isolated individuals are apparently devoid.

Having complained in one of his speeches of the lack of foresight displayed by many rulers, the President added:

> The vision of that which is needed for the accomplishment of great reforms has rarely been granted to those who rule over the nations. . . . Europe is shaken at the present moment to the depths of her being, for she sees that the statesmen are without vision and that the peoples alone have had this vision.

The assertion respecting the frequent lack of perspicacity in diplomatists and the rulers of States is incontestable. But that relating to the prevision of the peoples is a shocking psychological error. That a collectivity should see more correctly than an individual is a conception

absolutely contrary to the laws, to-day well known, of the psychology of the crowd.

To consider only present events, where are the peoples who have manifested a correct prevision of their interests? The whole German nation pressed forward toward the war and accepted it with enthusiasm. With the same enthusiasm the Russian people welcomed the Bolshevik revolution which was to plunge the working classes, for whose benefit the revolution was supposed to be accomplished, into the profoundest poverty.

In reality, while the peoples readily perceive their immediate needs, they see nothing beyond the present moment, and always retain the ingenuous simplicity of an Esau, spurning the greatest future advantage for a very small immediate profit. Only the leaders of men can point out the road to the multitudes incapable of perceiving it.

This was precisely the task of the rulers of the United States. They understood that this great country, without an army, threatened by Mexico and Japan, would gain greatly by the war. Finally the people were induced to enter upon a struggle which was to make them the arbiters of the world.

Is it credible that the American people would have dreamed, without leadership, of throwing themselves into this terrible adventure? Would they not rather have preferred the immediate advantages of a profitable trade with the belligerents before their future interests?

What the American people did not see then they see very clearly now.

We may judge of this from the following quotation from the New York *Sun* of February 25, 1919:

> It is certain that the Americans did not plunge into the fight solely because of their love of humanity. We crossed the Atlantic to help to save France and England, for if they had been conquered it would have been our turn to be attacked, and it is extremely probable that we too should have gone under. Consequently, it was to save ourselves that we crossed the Atlantic.

The dictatorship of the proletariat, the chief aspiration of Socialism, implies, of course, that the proletariat must

possess special capacities. But the Russian experiment, carried out on a great scale, has on the contrary proved its absolute incapacity. The attempts made in Germany have furnished additional proof.

Another fact which is revealed by revolutionary upheavals is the savage degree of ferocity engendered by doctrines based on the hatred of any sort of superiority, whether of wealth or intellect.

To establish its dream of universal equality Bolshevik Socialism has systematically proceeded to massacre all the *élite* of the race. And this it has done with refinements of cruelty that have filled the world with horror.

An official narrative published by the British Government, based on the evidence of its representatives in Russia, gives details of the Bolshevik savagery which show to what extremities men may be driven by envy and hatred.

Some victims were buried alive; others were cut into small pieces; others were hanged so that asphyxia was produced slowly. Officers were sawed in two alive between a couple of planks.

The executioners heeded neither the age nor the sex of their victims. A number of schoolboys were massacred simply because they would have grown up to be bourgeois.

The guiding principles of the rule of the proletariat have been stated by the Bolshevik leader in the following terms:

> Disregarding violence on the part of individuals, we favour the violence of one class against the others, and the groans of those who find themselves dismayed by this violence do not disturb us in the least. They must realize that the peasants or soldiers will command them, and that they will be forced to accept a new order of things.

All the intellectuals—scientists, professors, physicians even—were as greatly hated by the revolutionists as the capitalist bourgeois.

The *Journal de Genève* gives the following extracts from a Russian publication:

> "Stick the intellectuals with the bayonet!" shout the sailors. "Starve them to death!" yell the soldiers. "Death to the scientists!" bawls the people.

The Bolshevik writers were constantly preaching the "pogrom" of the intellectuals.

However, we shall not have long to wait. During the month of November more than one hundred and twenty intellectuals were massacred: schoolmasters, midwives, engineers, physicians, lawyers.

One of the few newspapers which the Leninites allowed for a time to appear timidly remarked that to build a railway or a steamship or to cut a canal intellectuals were needed. An elementary truth, of course.

But this is precisely the shame and the horror of our age. We are beginning to forget the alphabet, and we have to "prove," with a solemn face, that science is useful, that intellectuals have the right to live, and that if they were bayoneted no one would be any better off.

The Bolsheviks were at first absolutely uninfluenced by these considerations, and to prove clearly how useless they thought the intellectuals they appointed entirely illiterate workers, peasants and sailors members of their Government.

But experience was stronger than theory. When the rule of the proletariat had ruined Russia, the dictator Lenin was reduced to offering those bourgeois who were still alive enormous salaries to resume the management of the industries and the administration of the country.

* * *

Those who will accept only the evidence of witnesses of their own party may be recommended to read an interview with a Socialist, General Pilsudski, published by the *Journal de Genève*:

Seen from a distance Bolshevism represents, to the poor and oppressed, a hope of a better life and a desire for social vengeance.

But after seeing the ruin heaped up by the Communist system, I do not understand how any European Socialist can be in favour of it.

In two months, at Vilna, the Communists have worked absolute devastation. They are not civilized human beings; they are

savages thirsting for blood and pillage. When they came into power they issued, in five days, more than a thousand decrees.

The entire social and economic life of a people cannot be changed in a few days. Consequently these innumerable orders were not obeyed. So then the Terror was applied, to install Soviet government by force. Production ceased everywhere.

Lenin, who was going to renew society, has merely succeeded in establishing everywhere a state of affairs not far removed from death.

* * *

The leaders of Russian Bolshevism profess an intense disdain for the French Socialists, despite the humble advances of the latter. The newspapers have reproduced the following passage from one of the articles of the Communist *Internationale*:

It is time to make an end of this misunderstanding, already unduly protracted. The times are too serious for the French proletariat to endure any longer an alliance between the wretched policy of Longuet and the grand reality of the proletarian struggle for power. *Longuet and Vandervelde must be pitilessly thrust back into the filthy mass of bourgeois from which they are vainly attempting to emerge in order to reach the Socialist highway.* We have no longer any need of the worn-out machinery of Parliamentarianism, nor of its optical illusion. To make an end of the Longuet policy is a necessity demanded by the political gangrene.

* * *

The correctest possible judgements of Bolshevism are those of the Socialists and the Bolsheviks themselves.

Here is the opinion of an ex-deputy to the Duma, a very advanced Socialist, M. Gregor Alexinski,[1] on the results of the Bolshevik government: (1) Suppression of the liberty of thought. All newspapers not belonging to the Bolshevik party are suppressed. (2) Stoppage of industrial life; most of the factories furnishing barely 10 per cent. of their former output and the majority, moreover, being closed. They would all be closed but for the German specialists whom the Bolshevik leaders procure at great expense. The Red Army, too, is led

[1] Author of *Russia and Europe*, *Russia and the Great War*, etc., translated by Bernard Miall, published by T. Fisher Unwin.

by German officers. The labour organizations have lost all independence.

Le Temps of March 9, 1920, reproduced, from the Russian Press, the report of the Seventh Conference of all the economic Soviets of Russia, held in Moscow. This report revealed the bankruptcy of the Communist system.

It was admitted that the antagonism between the peasants and the townsmen was so great that the former would no longer feed the towns, and preferred to let the corn rot in the fields.

The industrial situation is even more serious: the production of labour has diminished by 70 per cent. The few factories that are working are doing so at such a loss that their output does not even cover the workers' wages.

Krassin declared: "I am compelled to say that life is proving to be stronger than the Communist doctrine, and that as long as it is not admitted that it is absolutely impossible to restore the economic life of the country with the Soviet government, I and all the rest of the Committees or Soviets will be able to do nothing. The latter will be only a hindrance even."

Lenin followed, delivering a speech which may be summed up thus:

"We must do for the popular economy and industry precisely what we have done for the army. The principle of collectivism must give way to the system of government by individuals; the development of the popular economy in our country has led us to it. The collective management of industry by all sorts of Soviets does not give us the rapid production which is now necessary. We must work energetically, reduce the powers and functions of the factory committees, and hand over the management of the factories to individual directors, who will naturally be Bolsheviks."

To remedy the industrial ruin of Russia, Trotzky could devise no other means than the militarization of industry, which for him means replacing the eight-hour day by a twelve-hour day. As the writer of this report remarked, the Communist experiment in Russia may be summed up in three words: terrorism, ruin, servitude.

Thus, after two years of experiments, Bolshevism has had to realize that the force of events is superior to doctrines.

Before the obvious bankruptcy of their system the revolutionists have simply returned to the old capitalist system. Private initiative is stimulated by allowing the

managers of factories to draw large salaries. Even in the Government workshops equality of wages has not been maintained. The managers and engineers are highly paid; the wages of the different workers are unequal.

"Piece-work has everywhere been re-established and a system of premiums has been introduced, with an obligatory minimum of daily output," under penalty of being shot. All strikes have been prohibited. In reality the Bolshevik Communism is merely an exaggerated form of the old autocratic Tsarism.

* * *

A revolution takes place in men's minds first of all, before it is expressed in action. The idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat has not yet provoked revolution in all the nations, but it has led them to conclude that the proletarians, being autocrats, have the right to advance the most incredible demands.

These demands are increasing and threatening the economic life of the modern world. The working classes are more and more losing the sense of possibilities.

A typical example of their mental aberration is furnished by the strike of the Austrian railwaymen at the very moment when the Entente had consented to feed Austria:

> The trains bearing the provisions are held up over the whole of the southern network of railways, and the strikers, who complain that they are dying of starvation, absolutely refuse to allow them to pass. A few days' further interruption and there will be a famine. There is nothing left; the stocks are completely exhausted.

And why this refusal, so prejudicial to the general interest? Simply because the railwaymen wanted to receive in future fifty-six shillings a week and be fed gratuitously.

If they do not appear so extravagant, the claims of the French workers are likewise excessive, as innumerable examples prove. Consider that of the sweepers and municipal workers in Paris, who demanded, as a commencing wage, the pay of a colonel and thirty days' annual leave.

Postal and railway employees, schoolmasters, officials, etc., have put forward similar claims.

The utter incapacity of these applicants to understand the reactions which would follow the realization of their demands is remarkable. The first result would be the destruction of the public wealth and then destitution for the workers.

It has been calculated that if the railways were to grant the demands which their employees are now making the Companies' deficit, already very large, would exceed £120,000,000. The final result would be that either the prices of transport would have to be raised to the point of making exports impossible, or, if the cost of transport were not increased, the dividends on the shares would fall to zero. The capitalists would not be the victims, for statistics show that these shares are in the hands of a host of small proletarians who have put their savings into them instead of keeping them unproductively in a drawer. Thanks to the joint-stock company, the great industries have been enabled to become collective while remaining individual and transmissible.

But the vast army of claimants foresees nothing of these reactions. It demands the impossible, and, in order to obtain it, does not recoil before the most violent threats. When the schoolmasters and Government officials have finally combined with the General Confederation of Labour, we shall see not only the destruction of all liberties, but of the industrial life of the nation, and consequently its ruin.

The thinkers of all countries are calling attention in similar terms to the dangers which the revolutionary spirit is bringing upon the world. "Never," writes a Swiss journalist, "has such a terrible unleashing of rival cupidities and uncontrollable egoisms been seen: national egoism, class egoism, individual egoism. The world is like a vast menagerie whose cages have all been opened."

* * *

The future will show how human societies will hold out against all the assaults that are launched against

them. The politicians are too short-sighted and too completely selfish to think of the future.

The classes threatened will therefore have to defend themselves. In Germany the middle classes are forming a defensive militia. In Bavaria and elsewhere the peasants are refusing to supply those towns that have declared in favour of Bolshevism.

Perhaps the peasant class will constitute the last element of stability in our civilization. The peasant's mentality, in Germany as in France, differs greatly from that of the artisan.[1] The peasant's labours in the fields make him, indeed, an individualist, and inaccessible to the influence of agitators, whereas collective work in the factory gives the worker a gregarious mentality which the agitator can readily control.

* * *

Whatever the dreams of sectaries, the increasing complication of modern societies will make the functions of the *élite* more and more indispensable and the dictatorship of the proletariat more and more impossible. The *élites* are a synthesis of a nation's energies. Its level on the scale of civilization will always be measured by the numerical strength of its *élites*. To them are due all the advances by which the multitudes profit.

Russia has just proved this by experiment. The material damage which her Communists have caused her is immense, but the destruction of her factories and her whole economic life is as nothing to the devastation caused by the massacre of her upper classes. Never did any country so need *élites* as Russia does. This semi-barbarian Empire was partly civilized only thanks to a small *élite*. Now it no longer possesses that *élite*, and as the impossibility of progressing by her own energies has been experimentally demonstrated, the country is forced to look abroad for an intellectual aristocracy capable of directing her. History has never afforded

[1] Since the above was written the Italian peasant—probably because he is often an agricultural labourer—has embraced Bolshevism, and the urban bourgeoisie is successfully reacting.—*Trans.*

so striking an example of the magnitude of the part played by the *élites* in the destinies of the peoples.

To destroy the *élite* of a nation is to lower the value of that nation to the level of its most ordinary elements, and thus to erase it from the roll of civilization.

In industrial struggles as well as in military conflicts the value of the armies is the value of their officers. We might apply to our great modern undertakings these reflections of Napoleon's, recalled by Marshal Foch: "It was not the Roman legions that conquered Gaul, but Cæsar; it was not the Carthaginian soldiers who shook Rome, but Hannibal; it was not the Macedonian phalanx that penetrated India, but Alexander."

* * *

The development in Russia of revolutionary ideals demanding the dictatorship of the proletariat is above all due to the propaganda undertaken by Germany. She evoked from the mysterious domain of the psychological forces certain destructive energies to which she herself fell a victim as soon as her military resistance was weakened. These new forces swept away, as though they had been dead leaves, the gods, the dynasties, the institutions, and even the philosophy of the most powerful Empire that the world has known.

Having broken the people that called them into being, these destructive forces have not disappeared. Spreading throughout the world, they are threatening the most brilliant civilizations.

It would be useless to profess to divine the limits of their action. The contemporaries of the beliefs which have on many occasions changed the orientation of the nations have rarely understood their power. Readily realizing their small intellectual value, they have not foreseen their success, and have neglected to defend themselves while defence would still be easy. Yet the lessons of the past should have shown them that the most absurd dogmas are often the most dangerous. It is only in the books of the professors that reason directs history.

CHAPTER III

THE RESULTS OF COMMUNISM

BOLSHEVIK Communism is regarded as the complete application of Socialism. It is therefore of interest to make a careful examination of the results of such an experiment.

We cannot be too grateful to the 136 French deputies who were the authors of the proposal that the Government should be invited "to set up an extra-Parliamentary Commission instructed to examine the economic and social methods and results of Bolshevism."

This proposal was preceded by a very long and very detailed report, in which the results already obtained were examined, the report being based almost exclusively on Bolshevik publications.

The authors of this remarkable document observe, in the first place, that the problems of social organization are at the present time dominated by two contrary formulæ.

One of these, the individualistic formula, seeks the solution of social problems in liberty. According to it, the best economic results are to be obtained by leaving the individual his freedom of initiative.

The individualistic is opposed by the socialistic formula, which requires the organization of a society in which the production and distribution of wealth, instead of being left to individual initiative, would be controlled by the State.

This absorption by the State constitutes what the upholders of this doctrine call the socialization of the means of production, transportation and exchange.

It is this new system which has been tested on so vast a scale in Russia during the last two years.

* * *

Before examining the official data which have already

been summarized in the last chapter, we repeat once again that Bolshevism, as its defenders declare, merely represents the strict application of the German Marxism accepted by nearly all our Socialists. It is quite distinct from syndicalism or trade unionism, a doctrine which in the eyes of the Bolsheviks is irreconcilable with Communism and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Slightly disconcerted by the results of the Russian terrorism, some of the French Socialists endeavoured to maintain that the Bolsheviks have interpreted Marxism incorrectly. It was easy to reply that its principles were too clear to be misunderstood. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the suppression of the rights of private property, the socialization of industry, the control of industry by labour, etc., constitute dogmas of perfect lucidity which are accepted by all Socialists. Moreover, a descendant of Karl Marx himself has declared that the present rulers of Russia, Lenin and Trotzky, are pure Marxists.

The Socialist doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat is realized by the Bolsheviks by means of local assemblies of working men, known as Soviets. They are elected by universal suffrage, but the bourgeois and the well-to-do peasant are excluded from them.

The local Soviets appoint delegates who constitute other Soviets. Every three months a Congress of the various Soviets of Russia is convened in order to examine the reports of the Commissaries of the People.

Practically these assemblies are without any influence whatever. The only real rulers are the supreme dictators. They dissolve the Soviets immediately if the latter oppose them; and when by any chance the opposition is too lively the dissident members are promptly shot.

* * *

The data published by the Bolsheviks and reproduced in the report which I have mentioned show how quickly the Communist government has disorganized Russia. Mines, factories, railways, etc., all collapsed within a few months.

The railways, which in 1914 yielded a revenue of

1,700,000 roubles, presented, in 1918, a deficit of 8,000,000,000.

All the nationalized industries show similar results. Under Socialism the receipts amount to barely half the expenditure, and the majority of the factories have had to be shut.

The disorganization thus produced has been recognized by the Bolsheviks themselves. It is their Commissary of Finance who writes:

"The systematic confiscation of industries has destroyed the whole mechanism of credit. The capitalists understood how to organize and how to deal with the national economy."

It would be well, the Bolshevik Commissary admits, with resignation, "to solicit the help of the more active of the bourgeois." As I remarked in a previous chapter, even Lenin eventually resigned himself to this course.

* * *

The general disorganization brought about by the nationalization of industry was very soon increased by the control of the workers—which both French and English trade unionists are extremely anxious to establish.

The official organ of the Bolshevik Government, the *Izvestia*, is forced to admit the bankruptcy of this system. It speaks of "an absolute lack of comprehension of the necessities of industrial production and a complete economic dissolution."

Even the most indispensable works, namely, the foundries, rolling-mills, engineering shops, etc., have been forced to close. The very few blast furnaces still working are doing so at a reduced output. The great cotton-weaving factory at Moscow, which formerly employed 20,000 workers, has now no more than 500.

At Petrograd, of the 400,000 workers employed at the moment of the revolution, two-thirds have disappeared.

The proletarians themselves have in the end recognized the bankruptcy of the Socialist doctrines that promised to ensure their prosperity. A delegation of members of the Social-Democratic and the Social-Revolutionary Labour parties has published the following appeal:

Our life has become intolerable: the factories are idle; our children are dying of starvation; instead of bread the hungry are given bullets; the rights of speech, publication and assembly no longer exist. There is no longer any justice; we are governed despotically by men in whom we have long ago lost all confidence, who know neither law nor justice nor honour, who have betrayed and sold us in order to retain power. They promised us Socialism, and they have merely destroyed our national economy by their crazy experiments. Instead of Socialism we have empty factories, cold blast furnaces and thousands of unemployed. Civil war is devastating the country and the fields are not yet sown. . . .

The unfortunate workers have not even been left the right to strike. At the slightest attempt at such a measure they are shot down wholesale.

The lot of the peasants is equally wretched. Bands of Red Guards, sent into the country districts to requisition corn, are obliged to fight pitched battles with the moujiks, who defend themselves rifle in hand and refuse the notes of the Communist banks.

* * *

Confronted by such results, the few Socialists who have succeeded in retaining a certain liberty of judgement are beginning seriously to doubt their doctrines. This is how one of the best known of the German Marxists expresses himself:

The most important task of modern times is to produce, and we shall see whether the capitalist or the Socialist system will produce the best in quality and the most in quantity. So far the Russian Revolution has lost its case. It has only succeeded in ruining the great industries, disorganizing the proletariat and driving the workers of the towns into the country. The only positive result of the Bolshevik activities is the creation of a new militarism.

The lessons to be drawn from the Russian experiment appear to be numerous. The plainest of them is that an absolute despotism may indeed destroy a society, but is powerless to reconstruct it.

The Bolshevik rule succeeds in maintaining itself in Russia only by means of a highly paid army, commanded in part by German officers, who are very well pleased to assist in prolonging a state of disorder from which they hope their country will one day profit. It is indeed to

Germany that Russia will inevitably turn when she wishes to emerge from anarchy and build herself up anew.

* * *

The foregoing account may cause the reader to ask why the 136 deputies whose report I have summarized thought it necessary to request the Government to appoint a Commission "instructed to examine the economic and social methods and results of Bolshevism."

Evidently the subscribers to this report knew very well what to think of Bolshevism. The object of their request was doubtless to draw general attention to the results of the first application of the Marxian theories, which are still, as we know, the gospel of our Socialists. And our Socialists in their turn are continually clamouring for the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialization of the means of production. It was therefore as well to be thoroughly familiar with the results obtained in Russia under the influence of these doctrines.

It is even more indispensable to inform the public, for Bolshevism is being propagated in every country by means of a legion of agents in the pay of the Russian dictators. Numbers of popular newspapers are maintained by them. It is the money stolen from private individuals and the banks that enables them to continue this propaganda.

It has won many new adherents to Bolshevism, not only in the working classes, but also in circles where one would not have thought to find so receptive a mentality. At the last Federal Congress of the Teachers' Union the reader of the report "considered that the Russian and Hungarian revolutions were doing well." Another schoolmaster spoke in favour of "the dictatorship of the proletariat," which he regarded as "an unavoidable historical necessity."

Such a lack of understanding where realities are concerned shows us what a degree of mental blindness is produced by certain beliefs which impose themselves wholesale by contagion on feeble intellects.

* * *

Apart from its economic principles, the inanity of which has been demonstrated by the Russian experiment, Bolshevism is based upon psychological foundations of a sentimental and mystical order whose influence has always been preponderant.

It has contrived to discover concrete formulæ to justify certain feelings which formerly were not usually admitted.

The so-called Bolshevik mentality is characterized above all, as I have already remarked, by an envious hatred of every kind of superiority, whether of wealth or intelligence.

Beneath its deceitful appearance of democracy Bolshevism is the very reverse of democratic equality. Its only reason for wishing to destroy the old social hierarchies is that it may re-establish them in its own favour by means of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In the eyes of the Socialist agitators such a dictatorship is a new feudal system established for their benefit. This feudal system is a dream very flattering to the vanity of the incapable, for it enables them to rise from a subordinate to a sovereign position. In this magic phrase " dictatorship of the proletariat " every mediocrity sees a new era in which, from being a subordinate, he will become a master, and will be able to play the tyrant over his former masters.

The Bolshevik mentality is as old as history. Cain, in the Old Testament, had the mind of a Bolshevik. But it is only in our days that this ancient mentality has met with a political doctrine to justify it. This is the reason of its rapid propagation, which has been undermining the old social scaffolding.

The Bolshevik mentality reveals itself not only in the spirit of revolt, of mutiny, of jealousy and hatred, but in a host of minor facts of everyday occurrence. Such a fact is recorded by one of the Swiss newspapers: the Socialist authorities of a large town decided to pay £240 per annum to the street-sweepers and £120 only to the engineers.

* * *

The dictatorship of the proletariat demanded by the

Bolshevik mentality may commit terrible depredations and destroy the most stable civilizations, but it will always be dominated in the end by the power of the intellect.

In the present stage of the evolution of the world the function of capacity is destined to become far more important than it ever was of old.

In the Middle Ages the feudal baron and his serf differed very slightly in education and intelligence. At this period human equality could easily have been established.

To-day it has become impossible. Far from tending towards equality, human brains are becoming more and more differentiated. Between the able seaman and his captain, between the artisan and the engineer, the differences have only been accentuated with the development of technique

Of course, a revolution may decree, as in Russia, that the seaman shall command the captain and the artisan the engineer. And it would be quite as sensible to decide that a man who had never heard a note of music should conduct an orchestra.

It is a curious fact that the craving for equality, and then for dictatorship, should have developed just when the advance of knowledge and the increasing complexity of civilization have rendered the realization of such a dream impossible.

With the formidable difficulties of modern technique, lack of capacity promptly leads to ruin. This the Russian experiment has proved abundantly.

Its results have shown us what becomes of a country controlled by incapacity. The Communist revolution in Russia merely replaced the absolutism of those on the top by the tyranny of those at the bottom. Its rulers simply adopted the Tsarist *régime*, while exaggerating it. Their police are more despotic than the Tsar's police; their bureaucracy is still more complicated than that of the old *régime*; and the liberty of the Press is far more restricted than it formerly was, since not a trace of liberty remains.

Until the time, which is probably distant, when the

truths which I have expressed are regarded as obvious, Bolshevism will continue to increase, absorbing the vast legion of the unadapted: discontented teachers, indifferent workers, envious pupils of the elementary schools; in other words, the alarming mass of vanity, incapacity and hatred of which the world is full.

To this army we may add that of those whose feeble and indecisive minds cannot dispense with a faith to direct their vacillating thoughts.

Once such minds are subjugated by a dogma, no experience, no argument can turn them from their faith. They remain enclosed in that magic circle of belief whose peculiar laws are quite alien to those of rational logic.

Without a profound study of these laws one cannot understand the influence of the great religious movements, such as Buddhism and Islamism of old and Bolshevism to-day, which at certain periods come to turn the world upside down.

The mind has progressed in the course of the ages, but the feelings have hardly changed. Modern humanity is led by the same illusions, the same dreams as of old. Mystic influences enslave us as in the past.

The power of reason has increased; the temples have been replaced by laboratories in which pure thought prevails; but unbending reason has no power over the mind of the multitude. The only masters to whom the crowd still hearkens are the eternal orators who create the mirages of which the history of the world is full.

* * *

The Bolshevik experiment is one of those which show most plainly how greatly the ends attained by wars and revolutions differ from the aims pursued. The Russian revolution triumphed by promising peace, and Russia to-day is making war upon all her neighbours. It sought to suppress militarism, and has merely succeeded in establishing a militarism which is harsher than any previous system. It sought to suppress the right of property, and in the end has created individual property in a nation to which collective property alone was known in the past.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROPAGATION OF THE REVOLUTION

We have examined the results of the Communist experiment, the final form of the revolutionary spirit that seems to be shaking Europe. We must now consider its propagation.

Europe is to-day a prey to one of those great mental epidemics which have scourged it more than once during the historical period.

Apart from religious beliefs, few upheavals have displayed such violence as the wave of revolutionary anarchy which is now ravaging a great part of the world.

The monarchies have not been the only victims of the whirlwind. The democracies themselves have not escaped its influence. Switzerland, the oldest of all, was threatened by the storm and was near to perishing.

Various causes, of which several have already been enumerated, are at the bottom of this world-wide upheaval. One of the foremost was the demonstration of the incapacity of those sovereigns who had pushed the nations into a sinister adventure.

The movement was then propagated in the neutral countries by that phenomenon of mental contagion to whose mode of action we have already many times referred.

* * *

Revolutions do not confine themselves to overthrowing someone or something. They also profess to replace what has been destroyed. On the heaped-up ruins the sectaries erect new fetishes: gods, princes or doctrines.

As there was no personality available possessed of sufficient prestige to replace the dethroned monarchs,

there was only one form of power that occurred to the popular mind: that of small assemblies which would watch over the interests of the various social groups. Thus arose the soviets, associations of soldiers and workers.

The interests of these groups were dissimilar and were necessarily bound to become conflicting. As none of them could acquire sufficient strength to make the general interest predominant, which in normal times is maintained by traditions, institutions and laws, absolute personal dictatorships arose in Russia and Hungary, and for some time in Germany.

In all the countries subjected to this system of government there was a return to primitive barbarism, the domination of the rational by the instinctive, the unleashing of passions no longer curbed by social constraint. A civilization, in fact, implies a network of restraints which necessarily check the animal tendencies that slumber in all of us. Against these restraints the envious, impulsive and unadaptable natures, eternally discontented, have in all periods of history been ready to revolt. As soon as an opportunity occurs they seek to overthrow them.

* * *

A popular revolution will never admit that it is guided solely by instincts and appetites. The theorists will seek to uphold it by philosophical principles. Thus did the men of the Terror strive to justify their actions by adopting Rousseau's dreams of the equalitarian happiness of primitive society and the necessity of realizing them.

The modern revolutionist has observed this tradition by representing his actions as the application of absolute Socialism: the socialization of the means of production, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the suppression of property, the confiscation of capital, etc. In quite a short time, as we have seen, this system ruined the country which had adopted it and led to civil war. Never was there a plainer demonstration of the devastating effect that may be produced by false ideals.

* * *

The historians of the future, who will despise the teachings of psychology as much as do those of to-day, will find it very difficult to understand how Bolshevism could affect a country as independent and liberal as Switzerland.

Yet, despite all anticipations, the Bolshevik apostles succeeded in provoking a general strike in that country which came near to stopping the whole economic life of the nation and compelled the Federal Council to mobilize an army of 60,000 men. The strike, however, ceased as soon as the Council decided to expel the gang of Russian Bolsheviks who were directing it. This should have been the Council's first step.

But their influence was at first so great that the Council had begun by yielding to their threats, without even venturing to protect those workers who wished to go on with their work. One of the leading Swiss newspapers remarked at this time:

"Master of the street in which there is no traffic but its own motor-car, the Socialist General Staff might have thought it had won the day.

"It was only after protracted tergiversations that the Government ceased to negotiate with the enemy. The Civic Guard then provided voluntary workers to replace those who refused to work and were seeking to hold up the public services: transport, posts and telegraphs, publication of newspapers, etc."

* * *

Germany, having done her utmost to assist the spread of Bolshevism in Russia, was forced for a brief period to suffer from it herself. She was hovering between the different forms of Socialism, and all appeared equally disastrous. The budget has become a sieve of the Danaïdes, and all the administrations—posts, railways, etc. —which used to be so productive are to-day being run at a loss. The yearly deficit of the railways alone is more than 8,000,000,000 marks. A prominent German newspaper states:

The number of unemployed maintained by the State is greater than ever. According to the official statistics it amounted, in November, to 388,300, of whom 96,799 were women.

The commune of Berlin, which has been forced to apply to its new employees the Socialist scale of wages, thought it as well to inform the persons within its jurisdiction of the present scale of salaries. The publication of these figures is instructive. We learn that the Director of the Municipal Commission of Highways, after twenty years of service, draws a salary of 8,760 marks; the annual wages of his chauffeur are 9,127 marks. An alderman draws 10,000 marks, but an assistant clerk gets 18,000 marks. An old employee in the same office draws only 7,960 marks. The departmental head of the office for the distribution of fats is paid 5,500 marks, while his book-keeper enjoys a salary of 8,700 marks. The inspectors of public gardens and promenades draw 6,570 marks, but a common gardener is paid 7,070 marks. A city engineer has to content himself with 6,600 marks; his office-boy draws 8,000. And so on, for several pages. Need I tell you that all these highly paid individuals are the protégés of the Socialists, and that they are instructed to watch and denounce suspect employees? The report concludes laconically: One cannot too greatly condemn a policy which gives rise to such anomalies.

* * *

The methods by which Russian Bolshevism is propagated are extremely interesting. Like the apostles of all beliefs, these gloomy fanatics long to spread broadcast over the world the pure truths by which they believe themselves to be inspired.

Their propaganda is conducted by means of newspapers and manifestos, but also and more especially by the direct activities of a legion of agitators abundantly provided with money.

A deputy from Geneva gave the Swiss Federal Council some interesting details concerning this propaganda at the period when it was supported by the Germans.

During the whole period of the war the German Great General Staff had active agents in Switzerland, notably Count Tattenbach, formerly known in Morocco, who was in constant relations with the agents of Lenin and Trotzky.

The agitators try above all to provoke popular disorder, which rapidly extends itself by mental contagion. To check such movements it is enough to provoke a

contrary agitation. As an example we may note the means taken to counter a manifestation planned by the Socialists in Italy with the object of causing a general strike :

It was enough that two young men, in the Piazza Colonna, waved a flag and shouted " *Viva l'Italia !* "—and hundreds of people gathered round the tricolour, shouting " *Viva il ré ! Viva l'Italia vittoriosa !* "

The group of demonstrators quickly became a river of human beings, and thousands of citizens, with officers and soldiers at their head, formed a procession.

* * *

We have on several occasions described how the Germans, during the war, made the greatest efforts to spread Bolshevism in France, knowing that it had already enabled them to disintegrate Russia.

Certain notorious trials have revealed the power of this propaganda and its results. It ended in the military mutinies of the beginning of 1917.

Victory made this danger more remote, but has not dispelled it. Bolshevism is one of the weapons which remain in Germany's hands, and it will be long before she ceases to use it.

A Germanophile author contributed to the *Politiken* of Copenhagen (October 10, 1918) an article on the results of the Bolshevik propaganda which gives an excellent notion of the ideas at present widely held in Germany :

In a few years' time the situation in all the belligerent countries will be the same : we shall find ourselves in the midst of a chaos which will recall the present state of Russia. Bolshevism is spreading all over the world ; the capitalists will be suppressed, the governments will go bankrupt, and the administration of States and cities will fall into the hands of the Workers' Councils. A terrible struggle for food will break out between the inhabitants of the country districts and those of the towns, and in the end only the best armed and the cruellest will have anything to eat.

The possible power of Bolshevism in France is due to the fact that it expresses, as I have already remarked, the aspirations of a great many Socialists. These latter

believe that it will enable the world "to be reconstructed upon new international foundations."

The speeches of such incorrigible dreamers justify the assertion attributed to Lenin: "Among a hundred Bolsheviks there is one theorist, sixty imbeciles and thirty-nine scoundrels."

The theorist is the most formidable of all, for, being convinced, he possesses the power which is always bestowed by a belief.

It is above all the theorists who are seeking to propagate Bolshevism in France, by means of the newspapers in their service. Those who hope that their propaganda will remain ineffective can know little of the mentality of crowds.

Bolshevism (wrote the *Journal de Genève*) has made millions in the pay of German Imperialism and by the pillage of Russia. These millions it is to-day spending all over the world with the object of fomenting a general revolution in favour of proletarian Imperialism. It is sending its emissaries everywhere; their pocket-books are stuffed with bank-notes and their purses full of gold. It is at work everywhere. It is stirring up disorder everywhere. Everywhere it is organizing committees, the framework of future Soviets.

The very real and highly dangerous progress of Bolshevism amazes those who are unfamiliar with the study of beliefs, and, consequently, fail to realize that the absurdity of a belief has never hindered its propagation. The serpent, the bullock, the crocodile and other animals have had millions of worshippers. Innumerable were the divinities who demanded human sacrifices. It seemed quite natural to Homer's warriors that a king should sacrifice his daughter to obtain from the gods a wind that would fill their vessels' sails.

The mystic, the affective and the rational belong to psychological cycles that can never intersect, so different are they. The history of beliefs and of their propagation is incomprehensible unless this leading conception is grasped.

BOOK VI

POLITICAL ILLUSIONS OF TO-DAY

CHAPTER I

THE DESTINIES OF THE NATIONS: BASES OF PREDICTION

THE consequences of the World War are upon us in increasing complexity, and they will burden the lives of many generations. The conceptions that of old served as the foundations of justice, morality and politics—in a word, of all the elements of social life—are dissolving day by day.

How shall we replace them? Where shall we find those guiding principles without which no civilization is possible? The political art is as yet so uncertain that our rulers have hardly any other guides than the impressions derived from their feelings and beliefs.

Impressions and beliefs are impermanent, shifting phenomena, variable as all things that emanate from life. Their domain is foreign to science, for they cannot be exactly defined or measured.

Confined principally to the cycle of inanimate things, science has built itself up by passing from the qualitative to the quantitative. While the qualitative is estimated only in accordance with impressions depending upon our temperament, the quantitative is expressed in dimensions capable of measurement. On these measurable dimensions science builds its laws.

Uncertainty always prevails in respect of phenomena for which it is impossible to discover a unit of measure-

ment. "Politics," to quote Mr. Balfour, "could only become a science if there existed a unit of happiness."

* * *

Sociology has made persistent efforts to achieve the progress realized by science in passing from the qualitative to the quantitative, but its measurements are only those of results already realized, not of the causes which determined them.

It is above all incapable of evaluating in figures the power of the feelings and the passions which direct our conduct.

All advances in science are connected with advances effected in the methods of measurement. Certain discoveries, such as that of the enormous extension of the region of invisible light, only became possible when the bolometer enabled us to measure the millionth part of a degree.

Apart from measurements which serve to record the magnitude and development of phenomena, the physical sciences achieve their discoveries by relying upon observation and experiment.

The so-called social sciences profess, indeed, to employ the same methods. But their experiments cannot, like those of the laboratory, be repeated at will, and are therefore of little value. The same is true of their observations, for these are made at different periods and in respect of different peoples; hence they are liable to give rise to illusory analogies. This is why the lessons of history are so rarely of any use.

We must not, then, be surprised if we see that men who find it easy to agree in the matter of scientific phenomena differ profoundly upon the fundamental questions of politics. In respect of scientific principles they had reliable guides, but in politics they have seldom any better guides than the opinions of their social or professional group, their covetousness, their sympathies or their hatreds.

Yet such influences are enough to create very powerful convictions. Senator Herriot said with reason in one

of his speeches that the domain of politics and that of the intellect are totally different things.

Yet the world progresses, men live their lives, and events follow events in sequent order. In default of scientific certainties, which are unknown in the sphere of morals, the peoples must perforce allow themselves to be guided by other certainties. Often fictitious, but still powerful, they are derived from the ideas of things which humanity forms in every period.

We have now reached a period when erroneous ideas may produce indefinite reactions, and may even, as in the case of Russia, lead to the ruin of the greatest nations.

* * *

Prevision, however, at least within certain limits which we shall presently define, is not impossible. Observation unhappily shows that forecasts are never believed. The ancient wisdom of the peoples declared as much in the famous legend of Cassandra and Apollo.

To mitigate the rigid virtue of the young Cassandra, Apollo had imitated the lovers of all ages by sending a gift as his ambassador. This gift was the ability to predict the future.

Doubtless regarding this immaterial present as insufficient, Hecuba's fair-haired daughter denied herself to the giver.

The Sun-god resolved to avenge himself. Unable, in accordance with Jupiter's command, to take back the faculty of divination, he decreed that Cassandra's predictions should never be believed.

This was in reality a cruel revenge. The unfortunate princess foresaw all the catastrophes to come and was powerless to prevent them, since no one had faith in her predictions. Because they would not listen to them, her fellow-countrymen lost their city and Agamemnon fell a victim to Clytemnestra.

I imagine that the solitary philosophers whom reflection at times enables to foresee the concatenation of events must experience feelings not unlike those that afflicted Cassandra of old. They doubtless tell themselves

that Apollo's penalty of unbelief is imposed upon all the predictions of mortals who seek to reveal to the peoples the future perils that threaten them.

History shows, indeed, that predictions are never heeded, even when they refer to those events which are easily foretold. We think of Quinet, reading in "the signs which are in the depth of things," long before Sadowa and Sedan, the terrible danger with which Germany was threatening us. Without going back as far as this, it must not be forgotten that none of the observers were listened to who predicted the inevitability of the recent war and the necessity of preparing for it.

Regarding their opinion as ridiculous, pacifists and Socialists continued their disastrous work of dissociating the national energies. Scarcely a year before the conflict one of the best-known professors of the Sorbonne published a long article in which he claimed to prove that a war with Germany was utterly impossible. His learned colleagues were too much of his opinion to think of disputing it.

Many other predictions, too, were made and were yet unheeded.[1]

* * *

Within what limits can the general events that determine the history of the peoples be foreseen?

Complicated though these events may be, they are as a rule controlled by a few essential causes, analogous to the great fundamental laws of physics, which, though few in number, are so rich in results. For example,

[1] Several newspapers have reprinted certain passages from my *Psychologie politique*, published fifteen years ago, in which I announced not only the recent war, which was easily predicted, but also—which was not so easily foretold—the savage form which it would assume. This is how I described the conflicts of the future: "Terrible struggles, ignoring pity, in which whole countries will be methodically ravaged until not a house, nor a tree, nor a man is left."

I need not now expound the reasons on which I based this prediction, so contrary to the humanitarian ideas then prevalent.

the laws of thermodynamics, which can be stated in a few lines, govern a mass of facts whose complete exposition would require several volumes.

The modern conception of natural laws has swept away the troublesome legion of capricious divinities imagined of old to explain all phenomena, from the increase of the harvest to the fury of the ocean.

Of all the gods of antiquity, Chance alone is still feared to-day. He is, however, evoked only when events proceed from causes unknown, or so numerous that the results emerging from their reciprocal action cannot be calculated.

But even when the interconnection of causes which constitutes chance seems inaccessible to our investigations, it is not impossible to determine their effects, on the simple condition that this chance is interrogated a sufficient number of times.

This is just what the statisticians do when they construct their tables of the birth-rate, of criminality, of exports, etc., from the data afforded by experience. Applicable to the past, they may also be applied to the near future.

However, these dry columns of figures which no eloquence can enliven tell us more of the moral situation of a people and its future than long speeches could do. They do not reveal the reason of things, but they enable us to foresee their appearance.

The most sagacious of the ancient sibyls could not tell the trembling visitor who questioned her when his life would end, nor could a modern scientist do so. However, being better informed than the sibyls, he can tell with accuracy from his tables the number of persons of a given age destined to die within a given period. He can also tell the number of crimes, violent deaths, marriages, etc., which will occur, in this or that country, in the near future.

The entire moral and material life of a people can be translated into curves, which may often be formulated in equations, as I have shown elsewhere. We may therefore enunciate the following law:

While impossible in respect of individual events, forecasts are often readily made in respect of collective events.

* * *

The foregoing statements show that social phenomena develop, as do physical phenomena, under the influence of invariable laws. They show also that a great multiplicity of observations is necessary in order to ascertain these laws. Now, history consists, above all, of individual facts which are not repeated, which is why it cannot, for the most part, be predicted.

But while in the present state of knowledge it would be illusory to speak of great historic laws, we cannot deny that a knowledge of the character of a people will often enable us to deduce its future reactions in the presence of certain events, and consequently to predict the general trend of its destiny.

Such predictions are still further facilitated by the application of certain general principles which have been sufficiently verified in the course of the ages. We are assured, for example, that anarchy always leads to a dictatorship. Thus it might easily have been predicted, during the bloody period of the French Revolution, that it would end in the rule of a master.

Basing his predictions on different but equally certain principles, the historian ought to have found it quite as easy, a few years later, to prophesy that the artificial empire of Napoleon would be no more durable than that of Charlemagne. It should have been easy, too, to predict that the world-wide military hegemony dreamed of by Germany could not possibly be lasting, even if realized.

But, as I remarked some pages back with reference to Cassandra, even if there were people wise enough to decipher the book of destiny, their knowledge would be of no advantage to anyone. The peoples accept only the truths that please them, and the modern statesman is too much the slave of public opinion to seek for any others.

CHAPTER II

NECESSITY AND NATIONAL DESTINY

We shall now examine some of the elements which permit of certain general predictions relating to the destiny of the peoples. There are others, but their detailed study would too far exceed the scope of this volume.

One of them, however, *necessity*, plays so important a part that we may fitly devote a short chapter to it.

Under the name of destiny, necessity exercised a considerable influence over the mentality of the peoples of antiquity.

Great Jupiter they set on the summit of Olympus. Sovereign master of the gods, lord of the starry heavens and the shadowy seas, he was greatly feared. Mortals trembled when the thunder revealed his wrath.

Yet the power of this mighty sovereign was not absolute. Far above him, in regions unknown, lived, solitary and without a court, a mysterious divinity to whose laws gods and men were subject. This supreme divinity was known as Destiny. It possessed no temple. Knowing it to be inflexible, no man prayed to it.

The ancient philosophers, including Plato, failed exactly to define the nature of this supreme power which the gods themselves were constrained to obey. It seems to have been a synthesis of the complex of the laws superior to our will: the force of events, Nature, Providence, etc., which, despite centuries of investigation, still remain highly mysterious.

The conception of an inexorable Destiny was bound to take shape in the imagination as soon as experience seemed to show that although our will can exert itself within certain limits it is powerless beyond these limits to modify the course of events. In the critical circum-

stances of national life, the rulers of empires, having for a time directed events, are then carried away by them and can no longer control them.

This impotence of the human will in certain phases of the development of things produced a great impression on Napoleon. He often referred in his writings to the impossibility of preventing events which he had seen taking shape.

The power of the superior forces whose complex constitutes *necessity* is formidable indeed. It keeps the peoples upon a given path and may become a prodigious source of effort. It was necessity, as I remarked in another chapter, which produced, during the war, men, factories and guns, and transformed all the conditions of our existence, and even our very mentality. Beneath its rigid hand the impossible eventually becomes the possible.

In particular, in various industries it resulted in progress which might not have been accomplished in ten years of peace.

It would take a volume to set forth the results. For example, under the stimulus of necessity the power of aeroplane engines increased progressively from 80 to 200, 300, 400 and 450 horse-power. The speed of aeroplanes rose from 50 to 140 miles per hour. At the same time the weight of engines was reduced from 4·4 lb. to 1·75 lb. per horse-power—that is, by more than 50 per cent. Nearly 90,000 engines, representing an expenditure of more than £80,000,000, were built during the war. At the beginning of hostilities 49 per month were being built, and more than 4,000 in October 1918, when the control of the air was becoming more and more essential.

I have chosen this example from among a thousand because it applies to the principal factor of future battles, but in a general fashion it may be said that during the war the whole of our industrial system was transformed under the stimulus of necessity.

Necessity will assuredly continue its work. For example, the increasing difficulties of transport and the

results, disastrous to industry, of an insufficiency of coal will necessarily lead to the suppression of the barbarous and wasteful operation of loading and unloading immense quantities of coal several times before they reach the consumer from the mine. We shall of necessity be forced to transform coal into electricity, that is, into motive power, at the spot where it is extracted. This motive power will then be distributed by metallic conductors to all points where it is needed. In this way the railways will be relieved of a great part of their work.

In most previous wars the statesmen clearly perceived the objects pursued. They knew that a small number of battles would decide the campaign, and that, whether it was won or lost, matters would then resume their usual course.

It is no longer the same to-day. The future is wrapped in darkness in which no more than a faint glimmer may be perceived.

Is there indeed reason to fear that man, having overcome so many natural fatalities, having built up resplendent empires, cannot prevent these frightful hecatombs, which would end, if they were often repeated, by annihilating our civilizations?

Without a doubt, a future war would be even more murderous and more ruinous than that from which we have just emerged. On the day of its declaration vast squadrons of aeroplanes armed with improved incendiary bombs would go forth to burn the towns and asphyxiate their inhabitants. Great cities would be destroyed almost instantaneously. It would be the final end of Europe.

The irresistible action of necessity, whose power has so often been proved by history, will perhaps protect us more surely than any alliances. We shall examine its possible influence in the last chapter of this book. Often enough before now it has solved problems that appeared insoluble.

CHAPTER III

THE PRINCIPLE OF NATIONALISM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

THE evolution of the principles guiding the life of the peoples is one of the most interesting elements of their history. For long centuries thousands of men have killed one another to establish the triumph of a conception which has seduced them; then the moment arrives when they fight as furiously with the sole object of destroying this very conception. We might build a vast city with the bones of the men who have died to establish a principle, only then to destroy it.

The principle of nationality, which has recently turned the world upside down, has known these contrary fortunes. For a thousand years all the peoples of Europe have gone to war to found great States at the expense of the small nationalities. The new masters of the world are now pursuing an opposite aim in seeking to liberate the small nations from the domination of the great States of which they finally formed a part.

Why are so many peoples demanding autonomy to-day in the name of the principle of nationality, and what does this controversy mean to them?

It means that they wish to be liberated from all foreign domination and to govern themselves.

This aspiration is due to the fact that in spite of all efforts on the part of governments obviously interested in maintaining concord, it always happens, when the peoples governed are composed of several races, that the weaker are inevitably oppressed by the stronger.

Innumerable facts prove the extent of this oppression. When the last Emperor of Austria declared an amnesty for political prisoners, on the day of his accession, eighteen

thousand emerged from the prisons in which the authorities belonging to the dominant race had confined them.

* * *

The principle of nationality is part of the stock of conceptions, by no means numerous, by which the diplomatists direct their operations. Weighty in appearance, they are often fragile enough in reality.

The definition of the principle of nationality seems a simple matter. It is, say the dictionaries, " the principle by virtue of which those races which possess a common origin, common traditions and a common language should form a single political State."

Nothing would be simpler if nationality were founded merely on race, but the truth is quite otherwise. I have shown elsewhere that a nationality may be constituted of four very different elements rarely united in a single people: race, language, religion and interest.

Race, contrary to the current opinion, is the least active of these various elements, simply because the majority of modern races are the result of crossings. In Europe we find, on the whole, only historical races, that is, heterogeneous races formed by the hazard of conquests, emigrations or policy.

Under the influence of common environment, interest, language and religion these heterogeneous races may, by a process of fusion, become one homogeneous race.[1]

Fusion between different peoples is the work of centuries. Having insufficient time at their disposal, the founders of various empires—Turkey, Russia and Austria notably—have simply replaced it by force. Their work has always remained, for this reason, somewhat artificial, and the populations, however submissive in appearance, are not yet amalgamated.

* * *

During the course of the war the Allies indicated, as one of their principal aims, the liberation of nationalities.

[1] The reader will find a further treatment of these questions in my *Lois psychologiques de l'Évolution des Peuples.*

In a speech delivered in the House of Commons Mr. Asquith said:

> There are no more harmful causes and ferments of war than the existence of detached nationalities, discontented and artificially divided from their real home and their own blood.

Fundamentally, what the Allies are seeking in the solution of the problem of nationality is the means of liberating oppressed minorities from the yoke of an oppressive majority. The problem seems as difficult as that of preventing the pointer of a balance from swinging toward the side of the more heavily loaded pan.

It will be especially difficult in countries where several nationalities are intermingled on the same territory. The tolerance of the ruling majority will depend far more on the mentality of its representatives than on any equalitarian laws that may have been formulated. A homogeneous majority will always be hostile to a heterogeneous minority because the power of the laws counts for little against the power of customs.

* * *

The principle of nationality has guided statesmen for many centuries past, but quite otherwise than to-day.

The political history of Europe may be divided into two parts. The first, whose duration exceeded a thousand years, comprised the formation of the great States at the expense of the small nationalities. During the second, which is of recent origin, the great States thus gradually built up—notably Austria, Russia and Turkey—have been dissolving into independent provinces in the name of the same principle of nationality.

The fusion of small States into powerful nations used to seem one of the most constant laws of history. France, Great Britain, Germany and Italy, formerly consisting of separate provinces, are types of this fusion.

However, the process was not general. Side by side with the large States there were small countries—Holland, Sweden, Denmark, etc.—which succeeded in retaining their independence and claimed the right to maintain it.

The German theorists, however, did not recognize the right of the small peoples to live beside the great nations without being absorbed by the latter. If Germany had won the late war, it is probable that not a single small independent country would have remained in Europe.

* * *

Even though we admit the value of the principle of nationality, its realization is almost impossible.

To apply it, in fact, one would need to know the actual wishes of the peoples. Hitherto no means of doing so has been discovered other than the plebiscite, but the rulers, introducing their officials and their creatures into the subject countries, will always obtain a favourable vote, falsifying the ballot if need be. The plebiscite would only be applicable in countries where it is unnecessary—that is, those in which the desires of the rival populations are definitely known, as, for example, in the case of the Czechs and the Poles.

The difficulty of applying the principle of nationality was well expressed in the Austrian Parliament by Count Tisza in the following words:

> In territories where the races and the nations are mixed it is impossible that each race should constitute a distinct State. It is only possible, in such countries, to create States without national character, otherwise the dominant population will impress upon the State its own peculiar national character. The principle of nationality is accordingly applicable only in the limited form which has been accurately defined by the President of the United States: "Every people must be guaranteed its own life, the free exercise of its religion and free individual and social development."

We may further remark that the principle of nationality is far from being universally accepted. Naturally rejected by the great empires, such as the British Empire, it is also denied by certain small countries, notably by Switzerland.

* * *

The significance of a principle can be thoroughly grasped only by examining its applications.

To begin with, it is obvious that the principle of nationality would lead to the formation of small and the destruction of large States.

As regards the dissociation of large States, the Russian experiment is categorical. It was in the name of the principle of nationality that the Empire dissolved, almost instantaneously, into a number of provinces, as soon as the Revolution was triumphant.

Far from opposing this disaggregation, the Socialists definitely encouraged it. During the conference of Brest-Litovsk the Russian Government declared that it was "completely in agreement with the principle of recognizing the right of every nation to dispose of its own fate, even by separation."

This meant accepting without protest the secession of the Ukraine, which had followed the example of other provinces by constituting itself an independent republic.

And here we perceive the mystic power exercised by a principle over its followers. None of the Bolsheviks understood that the loss of the Ukraine, almost as large as France, was a terrible disaster to Russia. Politically its separation involved losing the control of the Black Sea and all influence over the Balkans and Constantinople. Economically the loss was even greater, for the Ukraine was of all the Russian provinces the richest in corn, coal and iron.

Finland and the Baltic provinces have also demanded their independence, or have placed themselves more or less openly under German ascendancy in order to escape the still worse control of the Socialists. By consent of the populations or by forcible occupation, as at Riga, the Baltic provinces were on the point of becoming German. The absorption of Courland, Livonia, Esthonia and Lithuania, or a protectorate over them, would have been infinitely more valuable to Germany than the possession of Alsace and all the German colonies. The forestal and agricultural wealth of these countries is enormous.

To turn a great empire into a handful of provinces without the strength to defend themselves—such was the

result of the principle of nationality as applied by the Russian Socialists.

* * *

Austria-Hungary was the second empire to be disaggregated by the application of this principle.

The Austro-Hungarian monarchy comprised some ten nationalities all speaking different languages. The three most powerful, apart from the Hungarians, were the Poles of Galicia, the Croats and the Czechs. Each of these peoples is to-day claiming the right to govern itself, to form an independent State, and, of course, to exercise supremacy over its neighbours.

The real strength of the Austrian Empire resided in the contrary aspirations of the races that peopled it. All of them violently hated one another; but as their mutual antipathy was much stronger than their hatred of the Government, the tyranny of the latter seemed to them more endurable than that of rival groups. The Austrian Empire was based upon an equilibrium of hatreds.

We have just seen what were the consequences of the principle of nationality when applied to a great empire. In small countries like the Balkan States, where the same province, the same city, the same village is divided into populations which are separated by religion, race, language and customs, it engendered the bloodiest anarchy. As soon as they were free of the Turkish yoke, the Balkan States flew at one another's throats and rent one another furiously.

* * *

The principle of nationality, so simple when it remains in the region of those speculations which are beloved of diplomatists, presents, in actual being, a problem bristling with difficulties.

The centuries had almost solved these difficulties by leading the peoples which had been brought into contact on the same territory, by the hazards of conquest, gradually to unite under the influence of common institutions, thereby forming homogeneous populations. France, Great Britain and even Italy afford examples of this

process. In France, the small States of old—Brittany, Burgundy, Aquitaine, etc.—were eventually welded into one great country. It was thanks to this amalgamation that the instability of earlier periods was succeeded by stability.

But events have not everywhere permitted time to do its work. And now the theorists are seeking to oppose the work of time. The peoples are to begin all over again, in the name of their principles, a world-wide reorganization whose issue no one can predict. Any attempt to orientate the ideas and feelings of mankind in a direction opposed to that of the protracted evolution which directed their progress must of necessity lead to unknown consequences. One of the most probable would be a permanent state of war between all the small countries and the most terrible and widespread want.

Does the future belong, as the Germans maintained, to great States, which would daily become more powerful, or, as the latest theories would have it, to federations of small independent States? This is the secret of the coming period. The peoples are being drawn into the whirlpool of moral forces whose results are as yet unknown.

But if we are to estimate the actual value of a political conception for which so many men have died and are destined to die, we may say that the principle of nationality, with the fragments of truth which it contains and the hopes which it offers, belongs to the family of the great mystic illusions which at certain periods of history ravage the world and transform the lives of the nations.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERILS OF STATE INTERVENTION

FROM the considerations unfolded in several chapters of this volume, it results that, as we have no criterion of certain moral values, we can judge them only by their results.

The pragmatist philosophy so widespread in America has no other foundation than this. It inquires whether a political, social or religious idea produces useful or injurious results without troubling about its theoretical value.

We must therefore consider the results already obtained if we wish to determine the value of the increasing intervention of the State in the economic phase of society upon which we are about to enter.

According to the apostles of State intervention, the Government, by reason of its supposed superiority, ought to control the whole complex of a nation's industrial and commercial activities, depriving the citizen of initiative, and therefore of liberty.

This conception was one of the dreams of Socialism even before the war.

For the time being the war realized this ideal. Imperious military necessities forced the rulers to absorb all the energies of each country in order to direct them toward a single goal. Only a dictatorial power could achieve such a concentration; consequently such a power was everywhere established. Nations which formerly enjoyed a great measure of liberty, such as the United States, accepted a dictatorship of the State which they knew to be necessary, but which, when the conflict was over, they immediately rejected.

It has been otherwise with the Latin peoples. Their old tendency to arrange for the State to direct everything has notably developed since the end of the war. The proposals for the extension of State action which are daily brought forward prove as much.

Against these proposals of absorption manufacturers and Chambers of Commerce protest in vain. They know very well that the threatened realization of these schemes would soon become a cause of irremediable ruin.

Nothing, indeed, could have a more hopelessly depressing effect upon a country than the replacement of private initiative by that of the State. Initiative soon atrophies if it is not exercised, and we were far from possessing an excess of it. It was assuredly not by too much initiative that our diplomatists, generals and rulers offended during the war.

But even apart from the paralysis of initiative created by the development of State action, experience has long taught us that enterprises directed by the State are costly and indifferently carried out.

France has passed through many serious crises since the remote beginnings of her history. But none, perhaps, has threatened her existence more profoundly than the two perils which have arisen during the past few years: the German peril and the peril of State intervention.

Thanks to four years of gigantic effort, the death of 1,400,000 men and the expenditure of £8,000,000,000, we were able to triumph over the German peril.

There remains the peril of State intervention. Less obvious than the other, it might become equally dangerous by resulting in irremediable economic ruin.

Even before the war it had contributed to the condition of industrial and commercial decadence revealed by the statistics which I have already cited.

Our military victory does not mean the end of every form of conflict. The wars of guns and rifles may be followed by economic wars. Peoples whose interests are different and often opposed, and even the Allies of to-day, while remaining united in the military sense, may become rivals to-morrow.

Illusions upon this point would be dangerous. Enlightened thinkers, however, are able to avoid them. The following extract from a report read to the Chamber of Deputies in the name of an important commission will show this clearly:

> On the signing of peace the economic war, bitterer than ever, will become inevitable between the nations, and each of them will jealously retain all that may possibly increase the power of its merchant marine with regard to the rest, and often to their detriment. Even before the war which we are fighting in common has reached its termination, the national and economic egoism is, in spite of all, fully awake.

* * *

From the economic point of view the modern civilized peoples may be divided into two classes: the individualistic peoples and those that incline to State centralization.

Among the individualistic peoples are the English and, above all, the people of the United States. With them the activity of the individual reaches its maximum and that of the State is reduced to a minimum. The function of the latter is limited strictly to problems of general interest: the army, the police and finance in particular.

In the case of those peoples which tend toward State intervention—and all the so-called Latin peoples are of this class—the influence of the State is, on the other hand, preponderant, and under the pressure of the Socialists it is increasing daily. The State is gradually beginning to direct everything, manage everything and monopolize everything, and is intervening more and more in the most trivial activities of its citizens.

The classification which I have suggested is of necessity summary. To complete it would take us too far afield. It should be remarked, for example, that the Frenchman, a State interventionist in all that concerns collective interests, is an individualist where his personal interests are in question. It should also be noted why the Latin doctrine of State action is not analogous to the German doctrine. The great industrial enterprises that constitute

the economic power of Germany are due to private initiative, not to the State.

* * *

The necessities of the war having condemned all the belligerents to submit to the absolute rule of the State, it was natural that private interests should have been sacrificed to collective interests.

When the war was over the Americans immediately rejected this absolutism. Mr. Wilson, with proper pride, referred to the fact in one of his messages:

> Throughout the whole duration of the conflict the American Government was forced to group together all the material energies of the country, to harness them together, the better to draw the common load and bring our heavy task to a successful conclusion.
>
> . . . Directly we knew that the Armistice was signed we cast off the harness. The great industrial stocks and the machinery which had been requisitioned for the use of the Government have been restored to their pre-war uses.
>
> . . . Our people does not wait to be led. It knows its own business; it quickly finds its bearings in any novel condition of affairs; it goes straight for its object and relies upon itself in doing so.
>
> All the rules of conduct that we might seek to impose upon it would quickly become absolutely useless, *for it would pay no attention to them and would go its own way.*

In accordance with his constant tradition, the American confides his industrial undertakings to business men, while we leave ours to be conducted by functionaries, who as a rule know nothing of business.

* * *

The disappearance of State intervention in the United States was rapidly effected, because such intervention is absolutely opposed to the American mentality.

All the restrictive laws which are being multiplied in France, on the other hand, show that, far from undergoing any reduction, our policy of State intervention is becoming aggravated and will weigh heavily upon the nation's work.

The State will requisition, tax, regulate and prohibit according to the fancy of the most incompetent agents;

it will surround every undertaking with a paralysing and inextricable network of vexatious formalities, which are calculated to destroy all initiative.

This is the future that is threatening us. If it is realized we shall inevitably be defeated in the terrible economic struggle that lies ahead of us, and the Germans, whose industrial power was so great before the war, will soon resume their economic predominance. Now, in the present phase of the world's development economic domination is the most formidable kind of domination.

Unhappily for our future, State intervention is a long-established mental necessity among the Latin nations. There are few political parties in France which are not incessantly demanding State intervention.

This fact made me write, some time ago, that our country, so divided in appearance, has only one political party under various labels, namely, the State party; that is, the party which is incessantly asking the State to forge chains for us.

* * *

The fundamental psychological basis of production is initiative stimulated by risk and profit. So soon as responsibility vanishes, as in anonymous organization by the State, initiative disappears. Why should the functionary take any interest in work the returns from which are unknown to him, and from which he derives no profit? Moreover, he is entangled in a network of circulars and regulations which forbid him to exercise the slightest initiative, if by any chance he should think of doing so. On the other hand, such initiative would immediately be paralysed by the intervention of his superiors. With the best will in the world he cannot be anything more than a cog-wheel in a machine. All that is required of him is the strict observation of the regulations.

Such are the reasons why an industry perishes when the State intervenes in its conduct.

I have just spent the four years of the war in a State factory (writes M. R. Carnot, the engineer). Familiar with private industry,

I had, when I entered it—why should I conceal the fact?—rather Socialistic ideas. But when I saw the working of the Governmental industrial machine, both in detail and as a whole, my illusions fled, and I shall put off my uniform completely undeceived.

What is peculiarly serious is the absolute antithesis between the concept of industry as the modern world understands it and that of a State administration.

The author gives numerous examples, in his book, which prove how disastrous Governmental intervention may be. In the fitting-shops at Bourges, placed under the management of a Socialist Minister, the workers were paid by the day with the option of drawing a bonus for extra output. The Minister having granted a bonus to all the workers, the fall in output was instantaneous. When the circumstances made it possible to revoke this disastrous measure the result was immediate. "The output was sometimes more than three times as large as it had been."

The same author gives another example, equally striking, of the consequences of State intervention. A Socialist Minister, director of the department of the merchant marine, conceived the idea of instituting premiums based on the number of days occupied in navigation, so that the crew of a vessel had every reason to make the voyage as protracted as possible and to slow down the process of lading and unlading. The eventual result was that the colliers requisitioned by the State carried 40 to 50 per cent. less coal in a given time than vessels managed by the importers of coal doing business on their own account.

The same results were obtained in the railway workshops. The public authorities having decreed the abolition of piecework, the output of the workers diminished by more than 50 per cent.

One of the causes of the great costliness of State intervention is the fact that it necessitates so many employees. An instance recorded by the *Matin* for June 5, 1920, affords a striking example. Having vainly attempted to liquidate the stocks of material provided for the American Army, a task which the Government employees had every motive for delaying, the State decided to entrust

the liquidation of some of the stores to business men or manufacturers. The results were immediate. The merchant entrusted with the liquidation of the Aubervilliers stores began by replacing the 525 State employees by eight agents of his own appointment, and these eight employees had soon completed the work.

French Governmental intervention is the most expensive of all. It was stated in the Chamber of Deputies on March 22, 1920, that the budget of Alsace-Lorraine, which in 1914, under the German Government, amounted to £6,000,000, has now risen to £16,200,000. In the general administration the number of employees has been trebled.

The modern State undertakes a great multiplicity of functions. It exploits railways, tobacco and match factories, shipping, printing works, etc.—in short, some fifty different trades, which are administered by more than a million employees.

All these undertakings are conducted by methods which are totally unlike those adopted by commerce and industry. The State never troubles itself about net costs. Its employees are not in the least interested in the profits of its undertakings or their economical management. An estimate is drawn up beforehand which has no relation to costs of production or execution. Thus, the rebuilding of the Imprimerie Nationale, which according to the estimate should not have cost more than £120,000, has already cost more than £500,000. The modern State is really like a great business house managed by anonymous and irresponsible employees, none of whom, from the director to the least of the clerks, has any interest in the success of the undertaking.

State intervention, as has been remarked by an eminent economist, M. Raphaël George Lévy, is one of the causes of high prices :

> It was the State that first instigated the evil, by granting the workers in the munition factories exorbitant wages and by accepting contracts at such high prices that it was necessary to impose a special tax on the profits of the contractors ; it was the State that distributed thousands of millions of francs haphazard, without troubling to think how it would obtain them ; it was the State which, confronted

by its empty coffers, could think of no other means of filling them than compelling the Bank of France to issue fresh thousands of millions of paper currency. It was the State that intervened to regulate imports, exports and transport; it was the State that claimed the right to decide what merchandise might be brought into France and drew up a list proscribing other merchandise, and not the least important; it was the State that set up fiscal barriers at the very moment when we experienced a pressing need of many products manufactured or exploited abroad; it was the State which, by its clumsy or unreasonable taxation, sometimes reduced or stopped and sometimes unduly stimulated production.

The Roanne Chamber of Commerce recently described some of the results obtained by the State when it takes the place of business men responsible for their actions.

One of our leading newspapers cites the following example:

Some workers' delegates demanded twenty-five hours for the execution of a certain piece of work. The manager of the factory estimated that twelve hours were sufficient. In the face of this disagreement an appeal was made, in the form of an experiment, to a gang of prisoners of war, whose output, as it may be supposed, was by no means excessive. They did the work in six hours. Nevertheless, the manager was by order compelled to pay them at the rate of twenty-five hours' work.

The waste of the public money in State-managed businesses exceeds all imagination.

Results: general increase of prices; increasing difficulty of existence for unemployed workers; artificial increase of the wages of labour.

We might resign ourselves to the system of State intervention, the modern form of slavery, if only the State had manifested in its managerial functions a capacity superior to that of the average citizen.

But experience, as I have already remarked, teaches us that the very contrary is the case. Innumerable data have proved abundantly that State management, whether of railways, monopolies, navigation or industry of any kind, is always extremely costly, extremely slow and accompanied by unthinkable confusion.

In time of peace, when the country's finances are in a prosperous condition, the inconveniences of the general

increase in the prices of merchandise caused by the intervention of the State may seem trifling enough. But they become disastrous when a people is crushed by debt immediately after a war.

* * *

Every Governmental industry—that is, every industry placed under the direct control of the State—seems to be immediately struck with paralysis. Consider the lamentable condition of our merchant marine before the war: a situation created by State intervention, which gradually caused its descent from the second rank to the fifth.

The causes of this decline were very clearly indicated in the Parliamentary report of a large commission. The conclusions arrived at in this report were very definite: "Neither unity of opinion, nor co-ordination of efforts, nor method, nor responsibility. Negligence, disorder and confusion."

One of the members of this commission, M. Ajam, estimated the waste of money at £28,000,000. The State experiment of repurchasing the Western Railway was more costly still.

There is no end to such examples. It will be long before Frenchmen forget the story of the municipal authorities of a large town who, perceiving that the contractor who provided the town with gas was making his fortune, supposed that if they had the gasworks run by officials they would make the same profits as the business man.

The experiment was decisive. Far from making any profits, the commune found that its budget was progressively increased by sums so enormous that the mayor, who had been the instigator of this experiment in socialization, committed suicide in despair. But he died without understanding the causes of his failure.

* * *

But the causes of the decadence which overtakes the enterprises managed by the State are never perceived by the champions of State intervention. Why, they ask,

with an appearance of reason, should not the State, which selects its functionaries from among men who are reputed to be highly capable, succeed as well as manufacturers who are often less able?

The State does not succeed for two reasons: one is administrative, the other psychological. The first might, strictly speaking, be overcome, but the second could never be.

The administrative cause of its failure is a defective organization of unco-ordinated services divided into watertight compartments. The smallest business transaction is surrounded by innumerable formalities and passes through a long series of offices, which are actuated by differing motives and take months to look into the matter.

The organization of an industrial enterprise is a very different matter. The heads of the business are directly interested in executing any orders entrusted to them as quickly as possible and in such a way as to give the greatest satisfaction to their customers. Loss of time and waste of money would mean their ruin.

The second cause of the inferiority of State industries, the psychological cause, is, as I observed, absolutely irremovable. It resides in that very simple psychological law, experimentally verified thousands of times over, that a man working for the common interest is of much less value than a man working in his own personal interest.

Other factors aggravate this inferiority. No initiative is possible in work directed by officials. Still less possible is the love of risk which leads to ruin as well as to fortune, but without which no progress is possible.

For example: in bringing the construction of motor-cars to its present pitch of perfection many manufacturers have ruined themselves, but only a few have made a fortune. Can we for a moment suppose that if the State had monopolized the construction of motor vehicles at the outset it would have made the remarkable progress which has actually been effected? No Government employee would have dared to make himself responsible for costly researches and experiments which would not

put any money in his pocket, and whose possible failure would certainly have delayed his promotion.

* * *

The system of State intervention is usually a consequence of the mental structure of a people, but whatever the cause, its results are the same everywhere—even in America, when it has been established there as a temporary measure. The American railways were, as we know, taken over by the State during the war. They were decontrolled after the war, but they were then ruined and almost bankrupt. Despite the increase of tariffs, the total running costs increased by 95 per cent. under State management. This was truly disastrous, for the working capital of the railways of the United States, which amounts to some £3,600,000,000, forms an important part of the folio of the great American banks.

State control causes a mental transformation which appears spontaneously when it is established.

If other proofs are needed, I might remind the reader that those manufacturers who during the war were mobilized in the service of the State immediately lost their former qualities and acquired the defects of State employees: fear of responsibility, a love of red-tape and complicated formalities, wastefulness and lack of order.

* * *

It will be interesting one day to inquire what the abuse of State intervention cost the country during the war. It is to a large extent responsible, as I have already shown, for the general increase in the cost of living and the scarcity from which we are still suffering.

This conclusion is confirmed by the long report presented by M. Bergeon, on October 11, 1918, to the Chamber of Deputies, in the name of a commission of forty members drawn from all parties who were instructed to examine a draft Bill for the requisitioning of the entire merchant marine by the State in time of peace.

M. Bergeon had no difficulty in showing that State intervention had reduced our merchant marine to a very

inferior position as compared with that of the Allied nations, and had involved enormous deficits in the imports required to revictual the country.

The ineptness displayed in the utilization of the vessels requisitioned was prodigious. When we were in want of corn, our ships returned from Bizerta almost empty, while mountains of cereals lay rotting on the quays of that port.

Moreover, vessels were forgotten for months at a time, waiting for orders that never came. At Brest, the *Général-Faidherbe*, which cost £72 a day and was requisitioned on September 6th, remained eight months without employment.

Instances of this kind are by no means exceptional. M. Bergeon proved this by producing eight pages of tabulated data demonstrating, by the history of each of the vessels requisitioned, the enormous waste of time involved by Governmental incoherence.

Shipowners who administered their companies in such a fashion would have been promptly ruined, but no such shipowners ever existed.

Having shown that "the ships controlled by the State yield deplorable returns," M. Bergeon concluded by stating, as I have already remarked, that the general increase in the prices of articles of prime necessity was the result of Governmental administration.

It may be added, moreover, that the facts established by this commission had been established by many pre-war reports on the causes of the decadence of our merchant marine. Just as they convinced no one then, so they convince no one to-day. We should not be surprised at this. The policy of State control is based on a belief, and in all ages arguments have been powerless to shake beliefs.

* * *

State control means the autocracy of an anonymous caste, and, like all collective despotisms, it presses heavily upon the lives of the citizens compelled to support it. Its further development will not merely sap our industries, it will end in the disappearance of all our liberties.

We can imagine the horror with which the Americans would regard this system, which makes the citizen a slave. They endured it for the period of the war, but not a moment longer. If we do not contrive to check its progress we shall be rapidly defeated in the economic struggle ahead of us. This I cannot repeat too often. It will then become obvious to all that State intervention, so pacific a policy in appearance, may be more disastrous than the most destructive invasions. Its final triumph in any nation will involve that nation's irremediable decadence.

CHAPTER V

THE CRUSADES OF THE FUTURE

THE historians of the future will doubtless experience a certain amazement in respect of the fact that the twentieth century, in spite of its claim to be guided only by positive science, should have revived the age of the Crusades in the name of new beliefs.

It was indeed a crusade that Germany undertook to establish her hegemony in the name of the divine mission which she had attributed to herself. And her enemies entered upon another crusade in order to retain their independence. From the remotest corners of the earth hastened peoples who had no conquest to hope for and were yet ready to sacrifice everything for their faith. No longer, as before Jerusalem, was the Cross opposed to the Crescent. The opposition was between two absolutely different beliefs : absolutism and liberty.

* * *

The German crusade is not the only one whose birth the world seems destined to witness. Another is already looming up, and against a very sinister peril.

This is the crusade which will have to be fought against the oppression and the devastation which the Socialist and Syndicalist theorists are hoping to inflict upon France as they have inflicted them upon Russia.

The Socialist faith has been a burden upon all French policy for the last twenty-five years.

Foreigners were very well aware that this Socialist policy, " compact of ignorance as much as maleficence," had led France to the brink of the abyss, and that its triumph, rendered possible by the apathy of the other parties, would drag our country down to irremediable

ruin. In a speech delivered on July 5, 1918, by a prominent American, Mr. Walter Berry, the latter remarked :

> The mistake of France has been that she has allowed herself to be deluded by the mirage of the social laws while neglecting the laws of association and production.
>
> It is the association of individuals that makes the greatness of the United States : the co-operation of the classes, the collaboration of the worker with the capitalist ; solidarity in place of destructive Socialism.
>
> If there is no mean term between Militarism and Bolshevism, that is, destructive Socialism, it would be better that the world should founder here and now !

The German Socialists, who formerly invented the theory of the class war, have practically abandoned it long ago, and appear to regard it rather as an article for exportation, of great value in disorganizing foreign peoples. This is why they introduced it into Russia, by means of agents in their pay. The millions thus spent were much more useful to Germany than her guns.

The disastrous Russian experiment has not touched the indestructible faith of our Socialists. The war has taught them nothing. Incapable of evolution, they incessantly mumble the same formulæ, which for them are endowed with a magical virtue.

And if we wish to understand how educated men can become the victims of illusions, of which some, at least, could not bear the most superficial examination, we must always remember that Socialism is a religion much more than a doctrine, so that all arguments derived from reason or experience are necessarily powerless to affect it. The convinced Socialist believes in the gospel of Karl Marx as the Mussulman believes in the Koran. The assertions made by these sacred books are not to be discussed.

Probably the number of pure believers in Socialism in any political assembly is a small one, but their power is great, because a strong conviction will always impose itself upon weak convictions or the absence of all conviction. Now, the Socialists are almost the only people, in France at all events, who do possess strong convictions.

The mystic elements which form the weft of Socialism are strongly supported by two very active emotions :

hatred and envy. These are its great agents of propagation.

* * *

We may foresee the future of Socialism from the influence which it exerts already.

We are almost alone in not perceiving what a sinister future will follow the Socialist crusade. When the peoples have no other choice but that between the Socialism from whose effects Russia is now suffering and militarism, that is, between unorganized tyranny and organized tyranny, they will of necessity choose the latter. We shall then have the absolute rule of force and the final arrest of all progress.

This has been very clearly demonstrated by one of the most respected leaders of the British Labour Party, Mr. Henderson:

> The workers must understand that the democracy of the whole world is at the cross-roads, and that any mistake in the choice that has to be made may lead to anarchy, disorder, chaos, with the establishment of militarism in perpetuity. We must turn away from the road that leads to disorder; we cannot believe in the substitution of reason for violence in international affairs and at the same time in revolution by violence instead of by peaceful construction in economic and social life.

Internationalists, United Socialists, Bolsheviks and other theorists, the champions of peace between the peoples but of civil war in the interior of the nations, cannot understand this dilemma. They have undertaken a crusade against society as sinister as the German crusade against the independence of the peoples.

At the cost of the cruellest sacrifices we have succeeded in defeating the Germanic crusade. It will perhaps be equally difficult to overcome the Socialist crusade.

Two formidable systems of government—Militarism and Socialism—are threatening the modern civilizations with a long return to barbarism. Militarism is a form of feudal absolutism; Socialism is the ultimate expression of popular despotism. The truly civilized nations will soon learn to refuse any dictatorship, whether of the proletariat or the sword.

BOOK VII

THE POLITICAL DISORGANIZATION OF EUROPE

CHAPTER I

FIRST DIFFICULTIES OF THE PEACE PROBLEM

If it is true that the real duration of life is to be measured not by the number of days, but the variety and intensity of the sensations accumulated during those days, we may venture to say that the men of the present generation will have lived most unusually long lives.

They have, indeed, seen things that humanity had never previously beheld and will probably never see again.

It is true that the world has more than once suffered profound upheavals. Great empires have sunk into oblivion; nations have transformed their institutions and changed their gods; one after the other brilliant civilizations have perished. But all these changes were effected slowly. The Roman Empire took centuries to fall to pieces, and in reality it never wholly disappeared.

But we to-day have witnessed a series of instantaneous catastrophes, so utterly unrelated to the phenomena that can be predicted that they would have been regarded as miracles in the ages of faith.

A very perspicacious thinker might have been able, before the war, to predict the disaggregation of Austria, and perhaps that of Russia and of Turkey, but how could he have suspected the sudden disaster that overtook the formidable German Empire? Germany had attained the height of her power, and the world seemed in danger

of subjection to her laws. Then, in a few weeks, beaten on every side, she collapsed into shame and desolation.

These successive upheavals will doubtless be followed to-morrow by terrible reactions. What form will these reactions assume? What, for example, will become, in Austria, of the host of little rival nations which are all that is left of the great Power which had welded them together after centuries of effort?

If the lessons of the past could be taken for our guide, we might say that Europe is threatened with a series of wars resembling those which, from the Middle Ages onwards, were fought to weld those petty States into the great Empires which are now dissolved.

But the world has so far developed that the laws of the past do not seem capable of governing the future. New principles have come to birth, and, in the name of these principles, the old institutions and beliefs will doubtless undergo unforeseen transformations.

* * *

The difficulties arising from the peace appear to be considerable. Let us examine a few of them.

One of the foremost, especially in respect of Austria, will be to establish pacific relations between the States which have emerged from her disaggregation. This Empire, so vast and so venerable, is now broken up into petty provinces of unequal importance, inhabited by populations—Slavs, Hungarians, Germans, etc.—which regard one another with profound detestation.

The situation of all these States will be precarious for a long while to come. The Allies would certainly have found it greatly to their advantage to retain an Austria which, while of course enfeebled, would have retained the organization and the traditions which are at the root of national stability.

It is very difficult to contemplate the federation of all these fragments of nations. They are divided by interests too strongly opposed and secular hatreds of too violent a nature.

With the new ideals of nationality, which imply the

right of self-determination, of independence, for every population, it is probable, as I have already remarked, that all these little nations will return to the remote periods of history when the whole of Europe was divided into small States continually at war. A thousand years of war were needed to amalgamate them.

Austria, then, and Russia seem threatened with a return to the phase of evolution which France had attained when she was composed of independent and rival provinces—Normandy, Burgundy, Brittany, etc. Only the future will tell us whether this regression, whose necessity is asserted in the speeches of our politicians, will constitute an advance. Personally I very much doubt it.

As regards Russia, her political difficulties will be no less than those of Austria. No organized Power has been willing to negotiate with the dictators who have inherited the power of the Tsars. It will be equally difficult to negotiate with the small, improvised, unstable republics which are daily springing up upon Russian soil and seem doomed to an ephemeral existence. On the other hand, how shall we prevent Germany from transforming Russia into a German colony, as she was attempting to do, with increasing success, in the years before the war?

* * *

The difficulties presented by Germany are of another order, but are equally great.

The principal problem for the Allies is to prevent her from becoming sufficiently powerful to be once more dangerous.

A difficult task. Having won the battle of Jena, Napoleon was confident that Prussia was paralysed. Yet a few years after her defeat our eternal enemy had reconquered her former power.

Of course, Germany will not immediately resume the obstinate pursuit of her dream of hegemony. She is still passing through that phase of uncertainty in which doubt has shaken the firmest beliefs. Her historians, her philosophers, her military leaders had taught her that,

being superior to all other nations, she had the right to enslave them. At the outset, brilliant victories seemed to justify the claims of her pride.

The awakening was terrible. In a few months a vast structure of illusions had collapsed beneath the most humiliating capitulations. Never, during the whole of history, had a people fallen so low after being raised so high. Her material weapons have been torn from Germany's hands, and it will be long before she can arm herself again; but she still possesses, together with her industrial capacity, that arsenal of psychological weapons which we examined in a previous chapter, and which, as I have shown, are often more effective than artillery.

Whether the future rulers of Germany are Imperialists, Democrats or Socialists, they will always be dreaming of revenge, and will seek to diminish the strength of their adversaries by propagating among them such political doctrines as may result in their disaggregation.

The famous French Minister who did so much to force victory to change camps had a vivid vision of the peril that threatens us when, on the very day of the Armistice, he preached the union of parties.

We have miraculously triumphed over the most terrible danger that has ever threatened France since the beginnings of her history. Prussia dreamed of annihilating our country as a political power and destroying its capital by fire. Although severely defeated, she will never cease to pursue the same goal. This cannot be too often repeated.

Only if we keep this threat well in mind shall we be able to maintain the necessary union not merely between the various parties of our own people, but also between the Allies.

* * *

The Peace, if it is to be, I will not say eternal, but lasting, must be utterly unlike the peace dreamed of by the Socialists. A peace in accordance with their doctrines would have been only a truce preparatory to further wars in the near future.

Yet they still persist in defending such a peace. On the very day of the Armistice the militant Socialists adopted an order of the day in which they demanded "an honourable peace, a just peace, a republican peace for the German Republic." They plainly showed their intentions by placing themselves under the honorary presidency of the German Socialist, Liebknecht.

Such blindness is difficult to understand when we remember the peace conditions which Germany, had she been victorious, intended to force upon us, and which were approved by her Social Democrats.

The union of the parties which still divide the nation will be difficult indeed to realize. The union of the Allies will be no less difficult, because of the divergence of their interests. Italy, for example, demands the shores of the Adriatic, which are likewise claimed by the Yugo-Slavs, who declare that they cannot live without them. Serbia, Rumania and Greece are continually demanding annexations.

It is for France, perhaps, that the problem of peace will be attended by the greatest difficulties. Because of her position as Germany's neighbour she will inevitably remain the guardian of Europe against any future German aggression. We have already seen what a heavy task this will be.

* * *

To all these political difficulties we must add the economic difficulties, which hitherto, unhappily, very few have been able to perceive.

France is the country which made the greatest effort during the war. She is also the country which has suffered most severely, not only in respect of the number of her victims, but because her wealthiest departments, from the industrial point of view, were methodically devastated. Without the reparations imposed upon the vanquished we should be threatened with complete economic ruin.

But these reparations will not at once re-establish our prosperity. It will take years to rebuild our factories and put our mines into working order. During the whole

of this period England, America and Germany, who were not invaded, and who still have their industrial plant intact, will be able to resume their economic life immediately, manufacturing and exporting merchandise and securing those customers of ours who will no longer be able to obtain what they need from France. Hence we must submit to further conflicts, and to the difficulties imposed by rigid regulations which are becoming more and more oppressive.

The period upon which humanity is entering is not an age of liberty or fraternity.

Rejected by all the Socialists and the partisans of State intervention, liberty is now no more than a doubtful symbol. Denied by all the champions of class conflict, fraternity is to-day an impotent illusion.

Of the revolutionary triad engraven for ever upon our walls, equality alone has seen its power increase. Having become the divinity of the new age, it will doubtless continue to drive kings from their thrones and the gods from their sanctuaries until the day when, no longer realizing the hopes of the nations, it will in its turn perish from the earth.

CHAPTER II

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BLUNDERS OF THE PEACE TREATY

To form an equitable judgement of the value of the Peace Treaty, which has become the new Charter of Europe, we must cast our minds back to the spring of 1918, to the time of the terrible German "push." Towns were falling beneath the avalanche; populations were flying before the enemy; the Marne was crossed and Paris was threatened.

At this period, still so near, the firmest optimists had almost given up hope. They would have welcomed with joy a peace ensuring merely the evacuation of the invaded countries.

Triumph led to a change of mentality. Our present feelings are based upon past despair and the devastation committed by a pitiless aggressor.

The consciousness of the rights acquired by victory, the memory of the pitiless conditions which Germany, in the days of her success, professed that she would impose on France, inevitably made a peace which at the beginning of the year would have seemed an unhoped-for miracle appear in some ways insufficient.

This is the psychological explanation of the fact that it was accepted with a good deal of discontent.

* * *

One might say without exaggeration that only two persons in all the world were satisfied: the President of the United States and the British Premier. Each represented a country whose interests differed widely from ours.

This incompatibility of interests became obvious at the time of the first negotiations. England, having soon

obtained all that she could wish in ships and annexations, opposed all the claims put forward by the French.

And apart from the divergencies that were due to opposing interests, many difficulties arose from the immensity of the task undertaken by the Peace Congress; for it had to modify the frontiers of a number of countries, to found half a score of new States, to remodel the international labour regulations, to restore Poland, to determine the fate of Constantinople and to satisfy the demands of the Rumanians, Greeks, Slovaks, Chinese, Japanese, etc.

To solve such an accumulation of problems two psychological conditions of a fundamental character would have been essential: unity of outlook and a decisive frame of mind. Both were utterly lacking.

Unity of outlook was almost impossible owing to the divergence of interests, but the lack of decisiveness might well have been less complete.

The statesmen directing the Congress allowed the whole world to perceive their irresolution by continually wavering between contradictory measures. One day they solemnly proposed to confer with the Bolsheviks on the Isle of Princes; next day they abandoned the idea. They wanted to defend Odessa, a centre for Russian trade, and then ordered its evacuation. Having decided to send to Bolshevik Hungary a general famed for his energy, they replaced him by a pacific agent who was almost immediately recalled.

The policy of the leaders of the Congress was neither conciliatory nor bellicose, but merely irresolute. They sometimes gave evidence of determination, but not knowing very well what they wanted, this determination changed its objective according to the impulse of the moment.

Such uncertainty could only result in fragmentary decisions, intended to conciliate conflicting interests and failing, of course, to conciliate any completely.

For example, the exploitation of the Sarre basin was conceded to France, and the administration of the country entrusted to the League of Nations, which, in fifteen years, is to demand a plebiscite which is to decide whether

the province is to remain French or be returned to Germany. What a source of future conflicts!

The same half-measures in Italy, Poland, and more or less everywhere. Danzig, a German city, indispensable to Poland as an outlet to the sea and necessary to Germany as connecting her with Eastern Prussia, becomes a sort of free city under the patronage of the future League of Nations. Consequently, Germany cannot communicate with her eastern provinces except by crossing Polish territory: yet another source of conflict.

The Treaty contains many more such. Thus, it does not hesitate to forbid the conquered nations to form certain alliances. Austria, notably, must not unite herself to Germany. What would such a prohibition be worth in the face of national determination? Would not the peoples affected recall the principle of nationality on which the League of Nations professes to be founded, a principle proclaiming the right of national self-determination? The union of German Austria with Germany, which is already encouraged by the Italians, would before long become inevitable. What Government would consent to oppose by armed force a fusion demanded by the interested nations?

* * *

On considering the first results of their decisions the statesmen assembled in the hope of creating a permanent peace must have been profoundly disappointed—with the exception of England, whose hegemony was assured.

In the first place, they found that several countries—Italy, Belgium, Japan and China—were threatening to withdraw from the Conference; secondly, the greater part of the populations of Eastern Europe were flying at one another's throats, without taking the slightest notice of the observations of a Supreme Council which was completely devoid of prestige.

The conflict soon became general, and it is still continuing. The Czechs are fighting against the Poles in Silesia; the Poles against the Ukrainians in Galicia; the Rumanians against the Ukrainians in Bukovina and the Yugo-Slavs in the Banat, etc.

Consequently, if we were to judge of the work accomplished by its first results, we might say that the Conference which was striving to make universal peace prevail all the world over had succeeded only in establishing a series of wars whose end it was impossible to foresee.

* * *

At the suggestion of the man who was its chief inspiration, the Peace Conference set itself three different tasks.

The first was the speedy conclusion of a peace with Germany.

On this essential task the Conference superimposed a second: the establishment of a League of Nations.

From this second undertaking arose a third, which consisted of shifting, in the name of the principle of nationality, the frontiers of ancient States which had been slowly traced by the centuries.

The duty of protecting the nations which may be threatened by Germany will fall to the future League of Nations. As, to the French representatives, this protection appeared very insufficient, they strenuously demanded more effective guarantees. Thanks to their protracted insistence, the President of the United States promised to propose to the United States Senate, and the British Prime Minister to the House of Commons, "an engagement by the terms of which the United States and England will immediately give their assistance to France in the event of an unprovoked aggression on the part of Germany."

The United States Senate flatly refused to accept such an engagement. England also declined it.

* * *

The foregoing summary will suffice to explain why the Peace Treaty was, generally speaking, so far from successful.

Its financial portion, writes M. Milliès-Lacroix, the spokesman of the Senatorial Commission of Finance, caused profound disappointment. "It was doubtless necessary that the President of the Council should consent to the conditions relating to finances and that he should encounter the invincible opposition of the Allies."

The same writer observes how precarious are the guarantees offered us, and shows that "the right to impose certain taxes, to collect the profits accruing from the German railways and factories, would have been the proper means to employ."

I myself had advanced the same argument in an article contributed to a periodical. This very means has for a long time been employed in respect of Turkey, and to great advantage.

An ex-Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Hanotaux, regards the treaty with just as little indulgence. He writes:

> The peace, as set before us, bears war hidden within its loins. Every imaginable problem is aired but not one of them is solved. With regard to the Sarre basin, there will be a crisis at a given date; the left bank of the Rhine involves a permanent crisis; as for Transylvania, Poland and the provinces detached from the Russian Empire, the catastrophe is immediate, gaping for its prey; while Constantinople and the Mohammedan world are in a disastrous muddle, which is spreading to Egypt and India. Russia is a ruin; Asia is chaos. As for the Slav and Balkan peoples, whose fate was the cause of the war, they have openly broken with one of the great Allied Powers, and such a state of affairs cannot fail to keep the peace itself in a state of suspense.

The representative of one of the victims of the Peace Treaty—China—has drawn from it the following moral:

> Perhaps this diplomatic failure will be, for China, a blessing in disguise, as the English say. China will realize that she must not count upon international justice, or on the help of foreigners, as long as she is weak. "Heaven helps those that help themselves." She will understand that before she demands her rights she must obtain arms, which are the only things respected in international politics. It is sad to be disillusioned, but it is still more regrettable to live in false security.

These reflections are full of wisdom. In the present stage of the world's development those peoples who are too weak to defend themselves seem condemned to disappear.

* * *

To be victorious and to profit by victory are two different things. Hannibal was victorious, but his contemporaries justly reproached him for his inability to

profit by the fact. This is why Carthage perished, although its great general had encamped beneath the walls of Rome.

Although somewhat time-worn, this page of history contains lessons which will always be true. A famous German diplomatist recently reminded his compatriots of the story, assuring them that Germany would be able, in a few years' time, to subject us to the fate of Carthage.

This destiny may possibly be ours if we are guilty of too vast an accumulation of psychological blunders.

The historians of the future will say of this war that it was engendered by psychological blunders and remained throughout its whole duration a conflict of psychological elements. To judge by the Peace Conference the cycle of errors is not yet closed.

Absorbed, no doubt, by the complex nature of their daily task, and the victims of illusions engendered by their personal views, statesmen are given to ignoring the hints that psychology might afford them. They rely upon inspiration if they are men of strong individuality, and upon mere suggestions of opinion if their mentality is irresolute.

President Wilson assuredly did not suffer from the latter weakness. He was a man of very strong will, but he was also the victim of great psychological illusions.

In a speech made before the King of England he asserted that the conception of justice is the same in all nations.

This assertion of a benevolent mind, judging men in accordance with the simplicity of his own ideas, might lead to perilous results in practice, as may easily be demonstrated.

In asserting that the various nations entertain identical ideas of justice—a conception denied by Pascal in a famous passage—the President forgot how greatly our own ideas of justice differ from those taught by the German philosophers and historians. He also forgot that the nations differ greatly in the matter of morality. There are certain peoples—for example, the Turks and Russians—who have always exhibited so feeble a morality that officials honest enough to administer the nation's

finances without peculation have never been met with in Turkey or Russia.

Nations behave, as I have often repeated, in accordance with their character, not their understanding. In dealing with them the important thing is, therefore, to understand their character, whence their morality is derived.

This dominant element of racial mentality is precisely that which is perpetuated through the ages without alteration. The bad faith and ferocity of the Germans have been noted by all historians, from the time of their first invasions.

Far from contesting these defects, the Germans are vain of them. Their writers openly maintain that a treaty has no validity unless it is in one's interest to respect it. Their generals assert that one must be pitiless toward the vanquished, etc.

Germany has always regarded deceit as one of the virtues of her national heroes. A few years ago she erected a statue to the German Arminius, who, profiting by the trust which Augustus reposed in his promises, treacherously drew the legions of Varus into the trap in which they were to perish. Frederick II of Prussia was extremely proud of having deceived Europe by the most solemn pledges while preparing to invade Silesia.

The German, for the rest, has never boasted of his chivalry or of loyalty to his oath. Not in Germany could you have found such a sovereign as Jean II, King of France, who, taken prisoner at the Battle of Poitiers and released on parole, went to England to surrender himself to captivity because the Duke of Anjou, accepted in his place as hostage, had escaped. For that matter, this sovereign was merely following the traditions of honour respected by the majority of the nations since the remote period when Regulus, released for a time on parole, returned to Carthage, although he knew that hideous tortures awaited him.

* * *

The decisions of the Peace Conference were as vague and contradictory as are most collective decisions.

A well-informed writer, M. Raymond Poincaré, has published an account of the Conference which will survive as history, and from which I shall quote a few passages:

Of the Conference, which met, in the first place, to arrange for peace, there was born one fine day, as though by a phenomenon of spontaneous generation, a Council, which has assumed the imposing title of the Supreme Council of the Allies, and has undertaken to settle the fate of the world.

We may judge of the incoherent nature of its deliberations from the following lines:

The history of the Allies' changes of opinion in respect of Eastern affairs, the Adriatic problem, and the attitude to be observed toward the Soviets is certainly worth writing sooner or later. It may afford some diversion to those who find amusement in cock-and-bull stories, but it will most certainly depress those who had hoped that each of the Allied Governments would at least come to some agreement within itself before it began to discuss matters with its partners, and would subsequently refrain from changing its point of view in accordance with the hazards of debate.

Consider, for example, the problem of Constantinople. Its progress in this matter has been a thing of twists and turns, of shuffling to and fro. What with London and the Quai d'Orsay, there has been the most incredible game of cross-purposes. . . . If it were possible to-day to devote a few minutes to an examination of the other Oriental problems, we should discover similar fluctuations in respect of Armenia, Cilicia and Syria, and we should see General Gouraud on certain occasions dismayed by the decisions imparted to him, concerning which he himself had not always been consulted.

The Peace Conference conceived the idea of rearranging the equilibrium of the world, forgetting that such an equilibrium is the work of centuries. This attempt has merely sown the seeds of division between peoples who had learned to tolerate one another. It might be cited as a proof of human inability to change the course of history[1] by means of conventions.

[1] It must be remembered that if the results of the peace were far from satisfactory from the French point of view, this is because it was necessary to be at peace with our Allies before we could make peace with the Germans. The remarkable revelations of one of the draughtsmen of the treaty, M. André Tardieu, show us how tenaciously the English opposed the most modest of our claims. President Wilson was almost always on their side.

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEM OF THE SOCIETY OF NATIONS

In the first rank of the important factors which shape the course of history we must place the formulæ of religious, political and social life. In every age, after a brief period of uncertainty, the needs and aspirations of the masses eventually find concrete expression in short, sententious phrases. Universally accepted, they ballast the nation's mentality, give guidance to its emotions, and give rise to unity of consciousness and of action.

These magic words need not represent the truth, nor need they be particularly definite. It is enough that they should produce an impression. Their vagueness enables everyone to see in them the embodiment of his dreams and to find in them a solution of the problems of the day.

These influential formulæ always come into being during the great historical periods. It was in the name of the formula "Dieu le veut!" that Europe hurled herself against the East in the time of the Crusades. It was in the name of a formula symbolizing the greatness of Allah that some obscure Arabian nomads founded a vast empire. Invoking the revolutionary triad still engraven upon our walls, the soldiers of the French Republic conquered Europe. It was to realize their motto "Deutschland über alles!" that the Pan-Germans dreamed of conquering the world.

While the rational content of these popular formulæ is often very small, their mystical content is, on the contrary, very considerable. Strangers to the laws of rational logic, they cannot be explained by the reason. In the days when Mahomet was preaching the doctrine that was to revolutionize a great part of the Old World,

it would have been easy for a philosopher to prove that the Prophet was the victim of hallucinations. Yet the soldiers of the formula that gave direction to their will-power were able to hold their own against the formidable power of Rome, founded an empire which survived for six centuries and a religion which is still extant.

If we seek to judge events that proceed from the mystical sources whence these formulæ derive their power by the sole light of reason, we shall never succeed in understanding the unfolding of history.

* * *

These general considerations, on which I have often insisted, because of the capital part which they have played in history, will help us to understand the prestige of a new formula, *The Society of Nations*, whose vague promises hypnotize the ingenuous minds of the multitude. The German philosophers contemn it; the diplomatists distrust it; the Socialist dreamer, on the contrary, regards it as the regenerator of the human race.

What is its actual value, and from what elements does it derive its power?

The nations are obviously passing through one of those critical ages in which their conceptions are transformed under the influence of unforeseen necessities.

In the obscurity which envelops them they turn anxiously toward the semi-radiance proceeding from new formulæ which are seeking to replace those whose prestige has suffered shipwreck.

They perceive a ray of light, though as yet, indeed, uncertain, proceeding from this mysterious formula, *The Society of Nations*, which promises to save the world from the inferno in which it is still immersed.

Its prestige is a recent thing, but the ideal which it interprets has long exercised the sagacity of the world's thinkers. Leibnitz, Kant, Rousseau and Bentham discussed the principles of a Society of Nations for the prevention of war. The various Hague Conferences did no more than apply their doctrines.

The opinions which have been formulated in the past

concerning the Society of Nations possess no more than a historical interest to-day, for the world has been completely transformed. It is only the opinions of those now concerned that matter to us to-day.

In respect of the possible establishment of a Society of Nations intended to guarantee a lasting peace, there is to-day an almost unanimous agreement to regard it merely as a coalition of well-armed nations.

This is the conclusion arrived at by the President of the *Académie des Sciences morales et politiques*, at one of the annual sessions of this Academy. He proclaims that the Allies

> must remain armed in order to keep the peace of the world. . . . All those nations which are not predatory by nature must unite for the purpose of preventing the rest from troubling the peace.

The same association of nations in arms was demanded by the President of the United States in his message of January 22, 1917:

> I am of opinion that mere agreements between the belligerents will not satisfy the belligerents themselves. Conventions alone cannot ensure peace. It is absolutely necessary that a force should be created so greatly superior to the strength of any one of the nations at war, or to any alliance hitherto formed or projected, that no nation or probable combination of nations would be able to challenge or resist it. If to-morrow's peace is to last it must be a peace safeguarded by *force majeure*, based upon the organization of the human race.

Thus we see that the most authentic opinions expressed during the war represented the Society of Nations as a simple military alliance, and no longer as a Court of Arbitration, which would in reality have been merely a continuation of the impotent Hague Tribunal.

Germany, on her side, conceived of a Society of Nations merely in the form of a Germanic hegemony. The idea of appearing beside other nations as an equal was absolutely contrary to the teachings of her philosophers and historians. She has always rejected anything that might bind her, in her books as well as in her behaviour. When, before the war, Great Britain and the United States

were parties to numbers of arbitration treaties, Germany refused to be associated with them, and professed, through the pen of her most eminent University professors, her scorn of treaties pledging the strong to the weak.

* * *

The realization of a true Society of Nations seems very chimerical to-day. The substitution of groups of nations, resembling those which the belligerents formed during the conflict, seems the only solution possible; but this would be full of difficulties. Those alliances which to all appearances are most to be relied on are at the mercy of a number of chance factors. The defection of Russia provides us with a terrible example.

We know with what hostility the Americans regard the projected Society of Nations. With their practical good sense they clearly perceive its futility. Their opinion is very well expressed by the following passage from a speech by Senator Knox, who was regarded as a probable candidate for the Presidency of the Republic:

> The only *raison d'être* that a Society of Nations could have, and in any case the only purpose ostensibly attributed to the Society involved by the Versailles Treaty, is that of assuring the peace of the world. Now, the peace of the world is not assured but threatened when thirty peoples out of thirty-one, for example, mutilate their liberty and their sovereignty in such wise that a political Council can command them to do what, as communities of free individuals, they do not wish to do, on the day when they have to choose between loyalty to the Society of Nations and loyalty to their country.

The armed peace toward which events are leading us is assuredly not the end proposed by those responsible for the project of the Society of Nations at the Hague Conference.

The eminent jurists who drafted the project were unduly forgetful of the psychological factors controlling humanity. They believed in the sovereignty of reason, whereas the experience of centuries shows that the peoples obey motives that are often very far removed from reason. Unable to shake off the influence of their

dream, they legislated for an imaginary and ideal Society, without passions, whose disputes would be adjudicated by an international tribunal.

Their plan was highly equitable, but illusory, simply because it lacked sanctions. Now, from the beginning of the ages the world has never known civil or religious codes devoid of sanctions.

These pacific dreamers forgot, moreover, that a confederation of the nations would of course include both large and small States. As human feelings are almost incapable of change, it was certain that, in such a Society, the less important States would be regarded much as the small capitalists are regarded on a board of large shareholders, and would only be able to speak in a timid voice

Such objections did not occur to the legislators of The Hague. Their task accomplished, they conceived for it a religious admiration and entertained no doubt of the solidity of its foundations.

The magnitude of their illusions is well shown by this passage from the speech of one of the most eminent of these legislators:

> What a spectacle is afforded by this image of Justice arising suddenly in the midst of the armies, and, of this you may be sure, imposing itself upon the most powerful military force!

The first shot fired at the beginning of the war dissipated these dangerous dreams for a long time to come.

* * *

Before seeking to federate peoples of dissimilar needs and mentalities, it will be necessary first of all to produce a certain degree of identity of feeling, if not of interest. This task is not a chimerical one, for the industrial, financial and commercial interdependence of the nations was tending toward accomplishment even before the war.

If a true Society of Nations is hardly possible to-day, there is no doubt that it will one day be possible. To convince ourselves of this it is enough to forget the black hours that we have been living through and to consider not only the increasing interdependence of the nations,

but also the mystic power of the formulæ mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

Accordingly, we may assuredly hope for a future Society of Nations of a pacific character. Universally accepted, it would become capable of creating a world-wide consciousness of community.

The war will have hastened the establishment of a Society of Nations, for it has proved in the most striking fashion the nations' need of one another, by the privations which overwhelmed them directly it became impossible to exchange the products which each produces according to its soil and its abilities. Without becoming brothers, men will hate one another less than is the case to-day when once they have realized that it is to their interest to help and not to destroy one another.

The greater the necessity for the exchange of merchandise, the more numerous will become those international associations and agreements of which, as I have already reminded the reader, a number existed before the war, independent of any political alliance. Such are the international conventions relating to the posts, telegraphs, means of transport, commerce, etc. They will develop with the new orientation of the world, and will hasten the day when, without treaties or military alliances, simply under the influence of the mental transformations engendered by necessity, the Society of Nations will arise spontaneously.

Organizations of the military type will then disappear, simply because the nations, no longer having need of them, will refuse to have anything further to do with them. And thus they will be finally liberated from the hideous nightmare that is still haunting them.

* * *

This phase of evolution is possibly still distant, but we must all, from to-day onwards, do our best to prepare for it, without forgetting that at the present time we can work for the future only in the shadow of our guns.

The following passage from the speech of a British

Minister shows what to think of the projects for general disarmament of which some pacifists are dreaming:

> There are people who call us militarists, *but Great Britain must possess a stronger army than before the war*, for although the armed menace has disappeared, new and serious obligations are incumbent upon us as a result of the war in the East, where our interests are much greater than those of any other nation.

The world, in spite of all the speeches delivered during the war, is now more fully militarized than it ever has been.

The most definite result of the Peace Congress is that it has, in contradiction of all its hopes, brought about the final triumph throughout the world of the militarism which for five years the Allied Governments never ceased to curse in their solemn proclamations. Once again necessity has shown itself superior to the intentions of statesmen and has demonstrated the futility of their speeches

CHAPTER IV

THE PROJECT FOR A LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND ITS FIRST RESULTS

THE League of Nations, which the Peace Congress would eventually have created if America had not opposed it, was in reality only an alliance between certain nations, and by no means, as I have demonstrated, a Society of Nations like that of which the diplomatists have so often spoken.

A pamphlet published by Viscount Grey records the reflections of a negro king, who, having accepted the suzerainty of England, was filled with indignation because he was no longer allowed to raid his neighbours in order to slay and pillage, and, loaded with booty, return in triumph to his tribe.

The narrator of this story remarks very justly that the theories of the negro king as to the relations between neighbouring populations were precisely those which are still put into practice by the most civilized nations.

What is more, they are in conformity with the teachings of the philosophers, historians and generals of Germany. For years on end they preached in their writings the utility of a war destined to enrich and aggrandize Germany at the expense of other countries.

It was to oppose these conceptions, which are contrary to the evolution of the world of to-day, that the League of Nations, which was intended at a later date to undergo transformation into a Society of Nations, sought the means capable of restraining the cravings, passions and beliefs which at critical moments urge the nations to rise and fly at one another's throats.

* * *

It is plain that Nature has made no attempt to establish between men a fraternity which is probably contrary to her mysterious ends. But human societies, stronger than Nature, have succeeded in setting up internal and inhibitive barriers which are supported by rigorous codes. In this way they have won the victory over individual hatreds and have forced the members of each society to respect one another.

The prescriptions of the codes were not enforced in a day; but thanks to the mental stability eventually created by heredity they have acquired a very great influence. The biological, affective and mystic forces which gave birth to conduct succeeded in effecting an equilibrium in the interior of each nation, and it became possible to establish permanent order.

But how establish such a code between the nations? How contrive to ensure that it shall be respected?

The task would be simple if the nations were guided entirely by the light of reason; but their motor impulses, I must once more repeat, are cravings, emotions and beliefs, which possess their special forms of logic, which are quite refractory to influence. Reason is sometimes able to dominate them, but as a rule it places itself at their disposal. This has been demonstrated once again by the war.

* * *

Let us briefly consider the scheme of the League of Nations, the criticisms which it has evoked, and the illusions and realities contained therein.

The project formulated by the Peace Conference being drafted "in the diplomatic dialect," as was justly remarked by Mr. Taft, the ex-President of the United States, it does not make easy reading. An American Senator has even predicted that the signatories will before long be quarrelling over the precise meaning of the document.

Extricated from the obscure verbiage under which it is buried, the proposal may be summarized as follows:

The League of Nations would in the first place consist of all the

Allied States. Later on, other States might be admitted, but only on the consent of two-thirds of the members.

War between the associated members would be prevented by a Court of Arbitration.

The entire military, financial and economic resources of the members would be united against an aggressor.

There was no lack of objections to this proposal, especially in the United States.

Senator Knox considers that the League, as here conceived, " far from preventing wars would render them inevitable."

The result of excluding the Central Powers will be to unite them more closely for their mutual protection, which will inevitably lead to the formation of a second League of Nations. We shall see, therefore, in the near future, two great Leagues of Nations, two opposing camps preparing for a further and still more terrible war.

A French newspaper raised a similar objection, remarking that Germany, confronted by the fragile and idealistic structure whose foundations we are endeavouring to build, would, with the help of Austria and other States, " proceed to erect a squat, powerful fabric containing a single inmate."

Mr. Hughes, the Australian Premier, did not regard the proposal of the Congress with any greater indulgence :

Who would venture to say that a League based upon words is more powerful than one based on facts ?—that the League of Nations emerging from a written document whose power has yet to be tested is to be compared with that great League of Nations *de facto* which, cemented in blood, has led us, through a long succession of trials, to the final victory ?

The hostility of the United States Senate to the scheme formulated by the Conference seems to be due to the fact that it does not wish America to intervene any further in European affairs. It is also due to the fact that the States, in the interest of commercial relations, would like to see the industrial power of Germany quickly restored.

Here is the text of the Lodge reservation, which was adopted by the Senate by 46 votes to 33 :

The United States do not assume any obligation to preserve the territorial integrity or the political independence of any other country whatsoever, or to intervene in controversies between nations which are members of the League or otherwise, in accordance with the provisions of Article 10, or to make use of the military or naval forces of the United States in accordance with any article whatsoever of the treaty, for any object whatsoever, unless in each individual case Congress, which by the terms of the Constitution has alone the power of declaring war or of authorizing the employment of the military or naval forces of the United States, should decide to do so by means of an Act of Congress or a resolution.

This is very far removed from the chimerical promises of Mr. Wilson.

* * *

It will be not uninteresting to know what the Germans think of a League of Nations intended to assure the world of peace. Their opinions are well summed up in the following extract from an article by Dr. Selig, published in the *Hamburger Nachrichten* for September 28, 1918:

No; there is no permanent peace, there are only temporary periods of peace, and the path which leads to them is the bloody highway of war, not the anæmic theories of the ideologists. The problems which are distracting the world and its inhabitants are to be solved by the sword, not by the vote.

* * *

The League of Nations, which is actually only a proposed alliance between certain nations, may not assure the world of a protracted peace. It will, however, if it is ever constituted,[1] be productive of certain useful results.

In the first place, it will prepare the way for the dominant ideas of the future, by giving birth to what the President of the United States has called an international psychology.

This new psychology will be a consequence of the mystic faith of the peoples in the power of the League,

[1] Written in 1918-19.

rather than a result of the promulgation of new juridical principles.

Until this mental transformation is effected—which may not be for a long time yet—justice will remain an entity conceived by each nation in accordance with its mentality and the events of its history.

It is evident, for example, as I have already observed more than once, that the conceptions of justice prevalent in Germany are very different from those entertained by other nations.

The formula of the well-known jurist, Jhering, "The might of the victor decides what is right," seems to the German to express an obvious truth. As for Nietzsche, he informs us that "a people has no duty save in respect of its equals. To inferior kings and foreigners it may behave as it pleases."

The majority of German philosophers and historians have always taught the same principles.

We must join them in admitting that since the beginning of history the only law recognized in international relations has been the law of the strongest.

We are right to endeavour to modify this conception; but to proclaim a law is not enough to cause it to be respected. The fluctuating will of the peoples cannot be enclosed in the ideal mould of the legislators. The rigid mechanisms of the jurists may codify customs; they cannot create them.

* * *

If under the impulsion of the stupendous events of the last few years the ideals of the peoples have been modified, then and only then it may be possible to change their conceptions of law. The law accepted by a nation is always a creation of its own mentality.

It is therefore permissible, without sharing all his enthusiasms, to say with Mr. Wilson that—

> When the ideas of the nations have been united, a force has already been created which is not only a very great force, it is formidable; it is a force which may quickly be mobilized, and which, when it is mobilized, is extremely efficacious—a force known

as the moral power of the world. We are standing in the dawn of a new age, in which a new science of government will lift humanity to a height which progress and success have not yet attained.

We shall understand the dangers of legislating too quickly in such a connection if we consider that in spite of all its good intentions the Peace Congress, far from establishing a lasting peace, has succeeded only in adding fresh causes of conflict to all those that already existed.

The immediate effect of its decisions was to reawaken the appetites, which had been assuaged by time, of a host of small nationalities, all of which now purpose to follow a policy of forcible self-aggrandizement at the cost of their neighbours.

So the Peace Congress has only added to the density of the atmosphere of hatred which envelops the world.

The result of this hatred is already to be seen all over Europe. Without speaking of the peoples divided by the horror created by mountains of corpses and pitiless devastations, we see new States that are barely formed rending one another to pieces. They did not even wait until they were fully constituted before entering into ferocious conflict.

The only really useful work of the Peace Congress was, not the establishment of a Society of Nations, which at present is hardly possible, but the preparation of a league between certain nations, that is, a sort of insurance society against any nation which might threaten the world's peace.

If Germany were convinced that several Great Powers would turn against her in the event of her attacking, she would assuredly abandon the idea of delivering any such attack.

* * *

With the object of proving the possible efficacy of a Society of Nations in preventing war, Mr. Wilson, forgetting that this Society already existed and had its tribunal at The Hague, asserted that "Germany could never have declared war if she had left it to the world to open the discussion relating to the aggression of Serbia, even had it been only for a week." And he adds that if

Germany had been certain that England would support France she would have refrained from precipitating the conflict.

These opinions may be defended; but is their author really so sure that the conflict, though postponed, would not have broken out later, and possibly in circumstances which would have left France without allies? The Morocco crisis, the constant increase of military power and the publications of the Pan-Germanists tell us how strenuously Germany was preparing for the struggle.

I always maintained that the Kaiser Wilhelm was probably the last man to wish for war, but that he would not be able to resist the pressure of opinion. The whole German nation demanded war, through its historians, its philosophers, its generals and even its manufacturers. Never was a conflict so popular.

When a nation wishes to go to war—and the peoples are sometimes even more bellicose than their rulers—no international tribunal could prevent it. A congress or convention will always be weak in the face of the formidable power of the beliefs and passions which, at certain moments of the nations' lives, hurl them at one another's throats.

We may perceive already, from the conflicts between the new States of which I have spoken already, that the humanitarian illusions of the politicians have not been realized. All these small nations have an absolute need of the Allies; they are living in the profoundest misery, yet they cannot refrain from furiously tearing one another to pieces. The collective hatreds unloosed by rival interests, passions and beliefs are always deaf to the voice of reason.

* * *

The unanimous decision of the diplomatists and the peoples to demand a League of Nations in the place of a Society of Nations, in which few persons continue to put their faith, is expressive of the general desire to prevent a repetition of the horrors which have ravaged the world.

A long while ago I showed that all the theories proposed as a basis for a Society of Nations were illusory. The rulers of the peoples are now aware of this, and are compelled to admit that this Society, if it were created, would differ very little from the present alliance against Germany.

Such an alliance might pave the way for a Society of Nations, but the latter will only be possible, as I have shown, if a true international government is established. Some of the elements of such a government came into being during the war.

But as a result of such a government the conception of national independence would undergo a transformation. It would be progressively replaced by the conception of interdependence. It would be characterized by the surrender of a fraction of the power of each State to delegates entrusted with the administration of international interests. This would be a new phase of national life, unknown to the statesmen of any period; but we shall assuredly see its development sooner or later.

* * *

Having vainly attempted to conclude a lasting international peace, the Peace Congress also sought to establish peace in the interior of each individual State. To this end an International Labour Commission was constituted, whose purpose was to work out some basis of agreement between the various classes of each nation.

A formidable task! The intestine conflicts are at present more menacing than external conflicts. Of the great European peoples, Russia, Germany, Austria and Poland are a prey to the devastations of civil war, and others, undoubtedly, will soon follow suit. Having lost faith in the principles which used to guide them, they are like a strayed traveller seeking his bearings in the midst of a pitch-dark night.

Confronted by the explosions of hatred that are still ravaging Europe, an eminent Japanese statesman, the Marquis Okuma, asks " whether the European civilization is not on the verge of final collapse, and in a situation

analogous to that of Rome, Egypt and Babylon on the eve of their final decadence."

Despite his determined optimism, President Wilson himself has sometimes revealed his anxiety. "If," he says, "men cannot to-day, after the agony of this bloody sweat, obtain the mastery over themselves and attend to the regular progress of the world's affairs, we shall founder in an era of hopeless and merciless conflicts."

The consequences of such conflicts would be fatal. The civilizations created by long centuries of effort would suffer the fate of the great Asiatic empires, which disappeared utterly from history after filling the world with the legend of their fame.

We must not, however, despair. On the contrary, we must hope. Hope is a moral force which generates other forces which enable men to overcome the most difficult obstacles. It was hope which enabled us, despite all the predictions of the wiseacres, to conquer the most formidable military power that the world has ever known.

CHAPTER V

ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Of all the countries to which Germany was a constant threat, France, by reason of her proximity, will for a long time be the most exposed in the event of the sudden assaults which are apparently becoming the rule in modern warfare. However far we withdrew our frontiers, we should always be close to Germany, while the other nations are divided from her by foreign territories, or straits or seas.

For several generations Germany will, of course, be on the watch for the slightest weakness on our part, and her whole policy will consist in sowing dissensions between the various sections of our country, and also between our Allies and ourselves, in the hope that a war of revenge may thus be made possible.

In default of the problematical Society of Nations, on what moral or material powers can we base our national security?

Must we depend upon ruinous armaments, which, for that matter, would only procure an uncertain security?

To count upon alliances would be an even less reliable means of defence. The lessons of history prove that the survival of an alliance for any length of time would be an absolute miracle. But the nations cannot erect their future upon miracles.

* * *

What, then, are the protective elements from which we might expect a more or less lasting peace?

We may enumerate four: (1) the people's aversion from war, of which they have felt the full burden;

(2) the progress of humanitarian ideas; (3) the necessities resulting from the increasing interdependence of the nations; (4) recent scientific progress, which creates engines of destruction whose action is so swift and so complete that no aggressor would dare to face them.

The first of these elements cannot enjoy a very long period of influence, for the simple reason that while Nature has given us a very long intellectual memory, our emotional memory is very short. What is acquired through instruction remains for a long while fixed in our memory; but after the lapse of a few years, what remains of the joys and sorrows that have moved us most profoundly?

The affective memory of the peoples is at least as short as that of the individual. Ten years after the war of 1870 the greater number of the conscripts, according to inquiries made in several regiments, retained only trivial recollections of the war or had not even heard it mentioned.

The struggle from which we are emerging has, of course, created much greater suffering than that of 1870, and it will, in consequence, leave deeper traces in the memory. But for the generation which will carry the men of to-day to the grave this war will be known only by books, and books have never greatly impressed the national mind.

The second factor of peace, the progress effected in the matter of humanitarian ideals, is hardly worthy of mention. Hitherto such ideals have merely had the effect of enfeebling the nations which accepted them to such an extent that these nations have been the victims of sudden aggressions which the peoples unaffected by pacifism were generally spared.

For that matter, almost the only apostles of the humanitarian doctrine are the Socialist theorists who endeavour to propagate their faith by means of civil conflicts.

The increasing industrial and commercial interdependence of the nations is a far more important factor of peace than the first or second of those enumerated. This interdependence, as I have already remarked, was

clearly revealed in the course of the war. The nations have perceived that they have need of one another in order that they may live, or even fight one another. Without the raw material provided by neutrals the belligerents would have been forced to discontinue the struggle.

The interdependence of the nations is nowadays so complete that it might be regarded as a certain safeguard against war were the world ruled by reason and not by sentiment and emotion. Unhappily, the world is not governed by reason. Once the emotional impulses acquire a sufficient force, reflection ceases to exert any influence over conduct, and once again the nations will go to war.

* * *

The efficacy of the various factors of peace which have just been enumerated appears to be somewhat uncertain.

We have now only to consider the effect of a scientific improvement of armaments which will permit of so swift a destruction of cities and their inhabitants that no country would willingly run the risk of being subjected thereto.

For a long while this idea used to haunt me. The reader will find in my book on *L'Évolution des Forces* the experiments from which I inferred that whole fleets and armies could be instantaneously destroyed.

These experiments were too costly; I was unable to complete them, and refer to them here only as a matter of curiosity. They were based on the transformation of concentric Hertzian waves into parallel radiations. Every object touched by these radiations becomes a focus of electric sparks capable of detonating shells and cartridges.

I had also indicated the means of protecting oneself from such radiations, in accordance with experiments carried out in collaboration with Branly, the eminent inventor of the principle of wireless telegraphy. These experiments, published in the *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Sciences*, proved that although the electric rays will pass through thick walls they are stopped by a sheet of metalthinner than a sheet of paper, on the simple condition

that the metal must not present the smallest chink, even though it were merely a razor-cut.

But I do not lay any stress on these experiments, for there will soon exist much more reliable methods of making war so murderous that it will become almost impossible.

In an article published at the beginning of the war I hinted that the wars of the future would probably consist of battles in the air and raids accomplished by aeroplanes of sufficient power to burn whole cities with their inhabitants.

At the very moment of the Armistice aviation had just undergone such improvements that this prospect was becoming a practical possibility. One of the most famous of modern airmen stated that with the latest improvements whole cities could be burned in a very short time. The Germans, of course, had undertaken similar researches, and a Copenhagen review announced that they were making "tremendous secret preparations with a view to obtaining the mastery of the air."

With aeroplanes covering 140 miles an hour, such as we have to-day, a country which had declared war in the morning might destroy the enemy capital with all its inhabitants a few hours after the declaration. But what would be the advantage of this ephemeral success, since reprisals would be immediate, so that its own great cities would be destroyed the same day by identical methods?

It seems probable that no aggressor would risk operations which would involve equal devastation in his own country.

The recent improvements in aviation of which I am speaking would also be followed by the unforeseen result of rendering our costly standing armies useless.

Moreover, the small nations could acquire weapons of warfare as destructive if not as numerous as those of the Great Powers; so that the weak would be almost equal to the strong, and far more effectually protected than by the most solemn treaties.

* * *

Are we to conclude from the foregoing that the cycle of wars is closed for any length of time?

We could draw such a conclusion if history did not show us how readily the nations and their rulers are swept off their feet by passions and beliefs.

The adventure which has ended in the collapse of Germany will forever be cited as a striking proof of the power of such affects. "If Germany had waited only a generation she would have possessed the commercial empire of the world," said Mr. Wilson in the Capitol of Rome.

Even in the event of victory, the war into which she was thrust by her mystic illusions would merely have procured her advantages greatly inferior to those obtained by her peaceful expansion. And yet she made the venture!

The Germans, although conquered, are not yet persuaded that material force is not the sole sovereign of the world, or that moral forces exist which are capable of overcoming it.

"The peace," writes the great manufacturer, Rathenau, "will be merely a brief truce; the series of future wars will continue indefinitely; the best nations will return into nothingness and the world will die of want."

* * *

These, of course, are the words of those who have been defeated. However, we must not disdain them too greatly, or believe that the peace now concluded will enable the civilizations of the world simply to resume their former progress.

I do not know if the war which has ravaged the world will result in a better humanity. One would need to be a very great optimist to admit this and to reach the following conclusions, which were formulated in one of his speeches by President Wilson:

"I believe that when we look back later on the terrible sufferings and sacrifices of this war we shall understand that they were worth enduring, not only in order to assure the safety of the world against an unjust aggressor, but also for the sake of the understanding which they have established between the great nations which must take

concerted action for the permanent maintenance of right and justice."

In this passage all that is taken into account is the relations existing between the peoples. Admitting that the war had the result of improving them, can we suppose that it will have improved the relations between individual members of the same nation?

* * *

Various signs to be observed in many countries show that the nations are now in much greater danger of civil war than of external conflicts. Russia, Germany, Austria, Turkey, Asia Minor, etc., are already a prey to intestine struggles and the destructive fury which they involve.

This consequence of the World War was almost inevitable. The only effective safeguard that any nation can possess is its social structure. Directly this fabric is shaken as a result of violent happenings, men lose the guiding principles which are needed for the orientation of their thoughts and actions. Deprived of guidance and of hope, they seek the leadership of new ideals, capable of replacing those which have lost their power.

It is by the paradise which it promises that Socialism is seducing the multitudes to-day. It obtains as its recruits not only those whose appetites have broken all restraint, but also all those who are discontented with their lot and the victims of the iniquities of which Nature is full.

The war will have increased the number of malcontents, for, having shaken all the stabilizing elements of society, it has resulted in a general dislocation of the social hierarchy. The "new rich" created by the war are surrounded by a legion of "new poor," consisting in part of the middle classes who were formerly the strength of the nation.

* * *

The results of the titanic struggle which France has sustained have shown us yet again that the future of the peoples is in their own possession, forged by their own hands. It is no longer the Parcæ, the dismal daughters

of Night, that spin the thread of their destiny; it is the human will. The historians of the great epic which ended in our victory teach us this on every page. A little less determination and we should have disappeared from the stage of the world. A little more, and we have triumphed.

The military strength of a nation consists in the valour of all its citizens. Its economic and industrial prosperity depend above all on the quality of its *élite*. When the *élite* of a country are on the decline, that country becomes enfeebled.

The best of our citizens are not lacking in intelligence, but their character is not always the equal of their intelligence. In solidarity, initiative, accuracy and continuity of effort they are somewhat lacking.

It is not enough to preach the necessity of such aptitudes. We must teach men how to acquire them.

Hitherto the University of France has concerned itself only with the development of the intellect. It must follow the example of the British and American Universities: it must train the character, or it must go.

Our future place in the world will depend upon the quality of the children now growing up. The future will belong not to the peoples whose intellect is greatest, but to those whose character is strongest.

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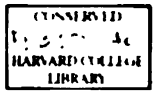
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